

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This document sets out the procedure to be followed to address or resolve complaints made against The Society for Acute Medicine (the “Society”) or any of its members (the “Member” / “Members”), where such a complaint is made by:

- (a) another Member of the Society; or
- (b) a member of the general public.

1. ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE

1.1 It is our policy to ensure that Members and the general public have access to a procedure to help deal with any complaints relating to a Member or the Society fairly and without unreasonable delay. We aim to investigate any formal complaint raised, hold a meeting to discuss it with you where appropriate, confirm in writing the outcome and, in some circumstances, to allow a right of appeal.

1.2 This procedure applies to the Society and to its Members.

1.3 This procedure is not intended to have contractual or other legal status. The Society reserves the right to amend this procedure at any time.

2. USING THIS PROCEDURE

2.1 Issues that could give rise to a complaint may include:

- a) health and safety;
- b) relations between members;
- c) bullying and harassment;
- d) society practices;
- e) discrimination.

2.2 If you have difficulty at any stage of the complaints procedure because of a disability or because English is not your first language, you should discuss the situation by getting in touch with us at administrator@acutemedicine.org.uk

3. RAISING COMPLAINTS INFORMALLY

Most complaints can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with the Secretary of the Society of Acute medicine. If you feel unable to speak to the relevant Member, for example, because the complaint concerns him or her, then you should speak informally to the President. If this does not resolve the issue, you should follow the formal procedure below.

4. FORMAL WRITTEN COMPLAINT

- 4.1 If your complaint cannot be resolved informally you should put it in writing and submit it to the Secretary of the Society of Acute Medicine, indicating that it is a formal complaint.
- 4.2 The written complaint should contain a brief description of the nature of your complaint, including any relevant facts, dates and names of individuals involved. In some situations we may ask you to provide further information.

5. INVESTIGATIONS

- 5.1 It may be necessary for us to carry out an investigation into your complaint. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from you and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents.
- 5.2 You must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending interviews, as part of our investigation.
- 5.3 We may initiate an investigation before holding a complaint meeting where we consider this appropriate. In other cases we may hold a complaint meeting before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases we may, at our discretion, hold a further complaint meeting with you after our investigation and before we reach a decision.
- 5.4 We may determine, either on receipt of the complaint or following investigation, that your complaint would be more appropriately addressed to another body. We shall inform you of this, and of which body may be more appropriate, upon determination.
- 5.5 If we consider it is not possible for the investigation and or the complaint meeting to be carried out by an impartial individual, we may, at our discretion, appoint a senior member of another medical college or society to carry out the investigation and or complaint meeting.

6. COMPLAINT MEETINGS

- 6.1 We may at our discretion arrange a complaint meeting. If we decide to arrange a meeting, this will normally take place within 28 days of receiving your written complaint.
- 6.2 You should make every effort to attend complaint meetings. If you cannot attend at the time

specified, you should inform us immediately and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

6.3 You are able to bring a representative along if you wish. The representative must be aware of the confidentiality agreement and may get asked to sign an oath to this effect.

6.4 The purpose of a complaint meeting, is to enable you to explain your complaint and how you think it should be resolved, and to assist us to reach a decision based on the available evidence and the representations you have made.

6.5 After an initial complaint meeting, we may carry out further investigations and hold further meetings, as we consider appropriate. Such meetings will be arranged without unreasonable delay.

7. DECISION

We will write to you, usually within one week of our concluded investigations, to inform you of the outcome of your complaint and any further action that we intend to take to resolve the complaint. Where appropriate, we may hold a meeting to give you this information in person.

8. APPEALS

8.1 If the complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing to the President of the Society of Acute Medicine stating your full grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

8.2 We retain the right to refuse an appeal where the person handling the complaint finds no conclusive evidence.

8.3 We may, at our discretion, hold an appeal meeting, normally within 28 days of receiving your written appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by a Society council member (usually a director), who has not previously been involved in the case (although they may ask anyone previously involved to be present).

8.4 We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within two weeks of the appeal letter being received.

8.5 This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.