

**MyOTAS**  
**Complaints Policy**  
July 2022

## **Introduction**

We aim to maintain high standards in all that we do but recognise that we can sometimes get things wrong, despite our best intentions.

MyOTAS views a complaint as a chance, to put things right for the person making the complaint, and to improve the service that we offer. We would not be able to do so or learn for the future if we did not receive feedback when things go wrong. Therefore, we value and take seriously any feedback we receive.

Generally, the purpose of this Complaints Procedure is to resolve disputes informally without resorting to formal investigation or legal proceedings. We will try to explore every reasonable option to resolve complaints by working with the person making the complaint to agree an outcome which is satisfactory to them and MyOTAS.

Whether a complaint is justified or not, our reply to you will describe the action we have taken to investigate the complaint, conclusions we have reached as a result of the investigation, and any action we have taken or are taking as a result of your complaint. We will ensure that all information received and produced in connection with a complaint is treated as confidential and handled sensitively, that only those who need to know have access to that information, and that relevant data protection requirements are all met. All complaint information is passed promptly to our Chair of trustees who will report on them to our trustees within 28 days.

## **Our Complaints Procedure**

- A 'complaint' in this context means any expression of dissatisfaction in relation to MyOTAS that requires a response.
- Complaints may come from users of MyOTAS' services, donors, fundraisers, supporters, members of the local community, or any other person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in our charity.
- This Procedure is only for the above type of external complaint, not for complaints or grievances from staff, volunteers or trustees.
- Whilst complainants are generally entitled to receive responses to a complaint and to challenge any responses received from MyOTAS, we will not deal with complaints or challenges where in the reasonable opinion of the Chair of trustees they amount to persistent, habitual or vexatious complaints or challenges.
- MyOTAS expects any complainant to be polite and courteous. It will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour or demands.

## **How to make a complaint**

- **First Stage** - If you have a complaint you can contact us by phone, email, or letter. To help us investigate and address all complaints, we ask you to provide us with as much information as possible. This should cover:
  - The reason for your complaint

- Where and when what you are complaining about happened
- The name(s) of anyone involved (if known)
- What outcome you are hoping for (but we are not obliged to resolve the complaint in that way)
- Your contact details (name, address, daytime telephone number and/or email address)

Who you should contact within MyOTAS will depend on how you decide to make contact, and on who you wish to make a complaint about. We have indicated below who you can contact.

- **Verbal complaints** - You can make a complaint by telephone during office hours, which are 10am to 3pm Monday to Thursday – alternatively leave a voicemail message at any time and we will return your call. If your complaint is about any member of staff, volunteer or trustee, you can phone us on 07840799718 and ask to speak to our Business Manager. They will either speak to you about the complaint or, if they are not the appropriate person to do so, they will arrange for the appropriate person to speak to you on the phone.
- **Written complaints** - If you do not feel that you can approach us verbally for any reason or if you would prefer to write to us, please send your complaint to us as follows:
  - by letter addressed as follows: Mrs S Read, MyOTAS, 57a Highcliffe Road, Wickford, SS11 8JP
  - by email to [info@myotas.org](mailto:info@myotas.org) - (please ensure that you add our email address to your contacts to ensure that you receive our reply into your inbox)

Once we have received your complaint, we will normally deal with it as follows:

| Who the complaint is about  | Who will investigate, deal with, and respond to you about it |
|---|--|
| Any member of staff (apart from Business Manager) or any Trustee or volunteer | The Business Manager   |
| Business Manager or CEO   | A designated trustee   |
| The Chair of Trustees   | The CEO and Vice Chair of Trustees                           |

**Timescales for all First Stage complaints made by phone, in person or in writing.**

We will try to resolve the problem as quickly as possible but if we cannot do this (for example, if we need to investigate further), we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within the following timescale:

- By phone or in person, either immediately or on the same day
- By email, within one working day
- By letter, within five working days



Our acknowledgement will inform you of when we will next contact you either with a proposed resolution or update. It will also inform you of the name of the person dealing with your complaint. That person will then investigate and deal with it and then respond to you with their definitive reply.

You should receive that definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

### **Second stage**

If, for any reason, you are not happy with the resolution of your complaint under the First Stage procedure outlined above, you can bring this to our attention as follows.

- Please address a letter to: Mr Danny Ireland, Chair of Trustees, MyOTAS, 57a Highcliffe Road Wickford SS11 8JP.
- Alternatively, please email Danny Ireland, Chair of Trustees at [info@myotas.org](mailto:info@myotas.org)

Please set out clearly the details of the complaint, explaining why you were not satisfied with our response under the First Stage and what you would like us to do to put things right. The Chair of Trustees will send an acknowledgment within 5 working days and arrange for one of the charity's trustees to investigate your complaint and respond with a definitive reply within a further 10 working days.

### **Third stage**

If you are still not satisfied with our response and wish to take your complaint further, please inform the Chair of Trustees within 28 days of receiving the definitive reply we sent to you under the Second Stage. Please contact by letter or email as required for the Second Stage (as above). Your case will then be passed to a panel of at least three trustees (not including any trustee about whom the complaint was made or the trustee who investigated and responded to you under the Second Stage. The panel will further investigate your complaint and will contact you with their conclusions and any actions to be taken. You can expect this to take a further 10 working days from the date on which we receive your letter or email request to implement the Third Stage.

### **Follow up**

In order for us to make improvements to MyOTAS and our activities, we may wish to contact you within a month of your complaint being dealt with in order to check that you were satisfied with the resolution.

Any information you give will only be used to make improvements to MyOTAS

### **Taking your complaint outside MyOTAS**

**Fundraising** - If your complaint is about our fundraising work and you are not satisfied with our response, you are entitled to take it to the Fundraising Regulator. We adhere to their Fundraising Code of Practice, which you can find separately within our policy documents. This is the self - regulatory scheme that works to ensure that organisations raising money from the public do so honestly and properly. As a member of the Fundraising Regulator, we are committed to abiding by any decision they

reach on complaints that are escalated to them. Their details can be found here: [Make a complaint | Fundraising Regulator](#)

**Charity Activities** - If your complaint is about any other aspect of our charitable work (other than our fundraising work), you may wish to contact the Charity Commission. However, we suggest that, before you do so, you consider whether it is appropriate to contact the Commission in the first instance rather than ourselves. The Commission has guidance on its website as to when to direct complaints to a charity and not to the Commission. Their contact details are: Charity Commission Direct, PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG Tel: 0845 300 0218 Website: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx) and [www.charitycommission.gov.uk/contact-us/general-enquiries/report-a-concern-about-a-charity](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/contact-us/general-enquiries/report-a-concern-about-a-charity)

### Other Authorities

The Charity Commission guidance to the public states that:

- if you believe there is criminal activity within a charity, you should inform the police
- if you suspect fraud connected to a charity, you should report it using the Action Fraud Online Reporting Service at [Action Fraud](#) or their phone number is 03001 232 040
- if you have information about possible terrorist activity connected to a charity, you should report it to the Anti-terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321.

This policy will be reviewed annually or when there is a change in circumstances, in work practices or the introduction of new legislation.

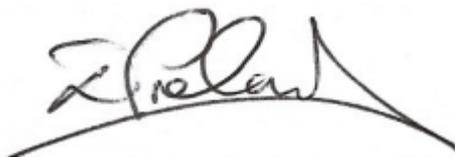
This Policy has been approved and authorised by:

**Name:** Danny Ireland

**Position:** Chair of Trustees

**Date:** 5/8/2022

**Signature:**



**Review Date:** August 2023