

ICUsteps Complaints Procedure

Introduction

ICUsteps is a small UK charity entirely run by volunteers. We volunteer because we care and aim to improve ICU experiences for patients and families. The charity is comprised of volunteer professionals from healthcare backgrounds and individuals with lived experience including former patients and relatives.

We understand individuals and families may be experiencing trauma and distress as a result of their experiences of critical illness. We aim to maintain high standards in all that we do but recognise that sometimes we get things wrong, despite our best intentions. Our aim is always to understand and to work to remedy the situation. We encourage your participation to work with us as we want to make improvements for everyone to benefit.

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ICUsteps views a complaint as an opportunity to put things right for the person making the complaint, and to improve what we do in the future. We would not be able to do so if we did not receive feedback when things go wrong. We value and take seriously any feedback we receive.

The purpose of this Complaints Procedure is to resolve disputes informally without resorting to formal investigation or legal proceedings. We try to explore every reasonable option to resolve complaints by working with the complainant to agree an outcome which is satisfactory to them and ICUsteps.

For each complaint we receive our reply to you will describe the action we have taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions we have reached, 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 confidentially and handled sensitively, that only those who need to know have access to that information, and that relevant data protection requirements are met.

All complaint information is passed promptly to our Chair of Trustees.

The information below sets out our Complaints Procedure.

Complaint

A 'complaint' in this Procedure means any expression of dissatisfaction in relation to ICUsteps that requires a response from ICUsteps.

Scope of this Procedure

Complaints may come from users of ICUsteps' services, those involved in ICUsteps activities or any other person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in ICUsteps.

This Procedure is only for the above type of external complaint, not for complaints or grievances from volunteers or trustees.

Whilst complainants are generally entitled to receive responses to a complaint and to challenge any responses received from ICUsteps, it will not deal with complaints or challenges where in the reasonable opinion of the Chair of Trustees they amount to persistent, habitual or unfounded complaints or challenges.

ICUsteps expects any complainant to be polite and courteous. It will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour or demands.

How to make a Complaint

If you have a complaint, you can contact us by telephone or email. To help us investigate and address complaints, please provide us with as much information as possible, including:

- The reason or nature of your complaint.
- What happened, where and when.

- 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 contacts you within ICUsteps will depend on how you to decide to make contact, and 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 in the following way.

If your complaint is about any volunteer or trustee, you can phone us on **0300 3020121**. We do not have a manned telephone line but please leave a message and we will aim to get back to you within five working days.

Once received, an ICUsteps Trustee will return your call to speak to you about the complaint in more detail.

If for whatever reason you do not wish to speak to us directly you can write to us as follows.

Complaints in writing

If you would prefer to write to us, please send your complaint via email to: contact@icusteps.org

Once your complaint has been received, we will deal with it as follows:

- Determine who or what the complaint is about.
- Identify who will investigate, deal with, and respond to your complaint.

Once we have clarity on the details of your complaint, it will be dealt with as follows:

| Who the complaint is about | Who will investigate |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Any member of staff or any Volunteer (apart from Chief Executive, Chair or Secretary) | Chair or the Secretary |
| Secretary or any Trustee | Chair |
| Chair of Trustees | Vice Chair or the Secretary |

Timescales for Complaints

We aim to resolve complaints 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, on the same day where possible, but no more than five working days due to us not having a manned phone line.
- By email, within 72 hours if you contact us by email.

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.

Resolution of Complaints

You should receive a definitive reply in response to your complaint 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.

Should you be dissatisfied with our response and wish to take your complaint further, please inform the Secretary via email at contact@icusteps.org within 28 days of receiving the definitive reply we sent.

Your case will then be passed to a panel of at least two trustees, not including any trustee about whom the original complaint was made or the trustee who investigated and responded to you. The panel will further investigate your complaint and will contact you with their conclusions along with 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.

Follow Up

If you are not satisfied with our response and wish to take your complaint further, please inform the Secretary via contact@icusteps.org.

For us to make improvements to ICUsteps and its services, we may wish to contact you within a month of your complaint being dealt with in order to check that you were satisfied with our resolution. Any information you give will only be used to make improvements to ICUsteps and its services.

Taking your Complaint outside ICUsteps

Charity Commission

If you wish to take your complaint further, you may 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: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>.

Other Authorities

The Charity Commission provides guidance to the public stating 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 [Reporting fraud and cyber crime | Action Fraud](#) or call **0300 123 2040**;
- 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**.

If a complaint relates to your personal data, it may be appropriate to contact the **Office of the Information Commissioner**.

Date of last review: September 2024

Next review due: September 2027