

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Scope

This policy applies to anyone who wishes to complain about TJN.

Background

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by TJN or its staff, or anybody directly involved in the delivery of our work. It is a criticism that expects a reply and would like things to be changed. Complaints could include the following (which is not an exhaustive list):

- Concern from someone we work with about the quality of programme delivery
- Concern from a member of the public or supporter about a fundraising approach or campaign
- Concern about the behaviour of TJN staff, directors or contractors
- Concerns about a conflict of interest that is not being addressed

A complaint has to be about an action for which TJN is responsible or is within our sphere of influence.

A complaint is not:

- A general query about TJN's work
- A request for information
- A contractual dispute
- An employee grievance (for which, see TJN's grievance procedure)
- A request to amend records (e.g. to correct an address or cancel a donation)
- A request to unsubscribe from a TJN 'service' (e.g. a campaign newsletter or email)

Principles

Accessibility

We are committed to making communication with us, including the making of a complaint, as easy as possible. Complaints can be made through written correspondence, by email, through our website or social media accounts, by telephone, verbally, or via a third party.

Timeliness

TJN aims to resolve complaints within 30 days of receipt. In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved within this timeframe, the complainant will be informed about the progress made to date and when they can expect to receive a response. Complaints should be made within three months of the relevant incident. In exceptional circumstances, TJN may be able to respond to a complaint that is older, although the passage of time may make it harder to resolve the complaint satisfactorily.

Confidentiality

Some complaints need to be kept confidential in order to safeguard those making or involved in the complaint. However, in some instances we might judge that the complainant will be better served if others are involved in the resolution of a complaint. Third parties will only be included in the resolution of confidential complaints on a case-by-case basis and with the agreement of the complainant.

Documented

Some complaints may be both made and resolved verbally, e.g. by telephone or face to face. Where they are unable to be resolved verbally, complaints must be made in writing. All complaints will be fully documented, however they are made.

Right to appeal

Complainants who have launched a well-founded complaint and who are unsatisfied with TJN's response to that complaint have the right to appeal. Appropriate appeal processes are outlined below.

After an appeal

After the internal appeal, there is no further internal process.

Mutual respect

Everyone who makes a complaint to TJN will be treated with courtesy and respect. In return, TJN expects people who make a complaint to communicate their concerns fairly and appropriately. Where complainants harass staff, behave abusively, or unreasonably pursue complaints, TJN reserves the right to withdraw or modify its complaints process. TJN also expects complainants to refrain from making their complaint public until the complaints process documented here has been completed.

Part of a learning process

We will log and monitor all serious complaints and results of such complaints and this information will be brought, regularly, to the attention of appropriate senior managers in order that we learn from what we do and how we do it. This information will not necessarily be made available to the public.

Complaints handling procedures

Receiving and recording

There are several ways you can register a complaint:

- Send a letter marked "Confidential: Complaint" to TJN's registered address (38 Stanley Avenue, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 2JG)
- Send an email with the subject line "Confidential: Complaint" to operations@taxjustice.net

- Fill in our [website contact form](#)
- Talk directly to a member of the TJN staff
- Contact us through [twitter](#), [facebook](#) or [linkedin](#)
- Call us on +44 (0)300 302 0062 and select option one
- Relay your complaint to TJN via a mutually known third party, such as a partner organisation

We record the following information on receipt:

- The complainant's contact details
- Date the complaint was received
- A copy of the letter or documentation received
- Specific issues complained about
- Any action requested
- The person assigned who will prepare the response
- Any immediate action to be taken

Updates on the progress of the complaint can be provided by emailing operations@taxjustice.net.

Acknowledgement

Within 30 working days of receiving a complaint we will send the complainant either a final response which adequately addresses the complaint, or a response which:

- Explains why we are still not in a position to make a final response, giving reasons for the further delay and indicating when we expect to be able to provide a final response
- Informs the complainant that they may refer the handling of the complaint to another organisation or TJN contact if they are dissatisfied with the delay

All complaints will be recorded promptly. A record of complaints is maintained:

- To monitor the progress of a complaint
- To provide evidence that the complaint was considered and of the outcome
- To identify trends or recurring themes in complaints cases
- To compile reports on complaints

Prompt recording ensures that reports can be created from the system and sent to senior managers which are accurate and reflect the real-time position. Accurate and prompt recording also helps us to comply with certain obligations and requirements.

Assessing the complaint

The following process will be used when assessing a complaint:

- We will assess the complaint to determine the best way to deal with it
- We will assign a specific individual to be responsible for dealing with the complaint
- We will identify the issues to be investigated
- We will work with the complainant to understand the cause of the complaint they have raised

We may need to contact the complainant during this time and their cooperation will be important in order to complete the investigation.

Taking action

The action taken will depend on the outcome of the assessment stage. Once the decision has been made to investigate the complaint, an investigation plan will be agreed and implemented.

Resolving the complaint

Where possible, we will resolve complaints informally by speaking directly to the complainant. The objective of an informal approach is to resolve the matter with a minimum of conflict or distress.

Where necessary, we will resolve complaints formally, by issuing an apology where the complaint is justified, fixing the specific problem, if appropriate, and/or by tackling the issue that led to the problem in the first place.

Providing feedback

We will send the complainant:

- A detailed written response describing the details of the complaint
- Comments addressing each of the violations alleged in the complaint
- A summary of the investigations undertaken to consider the complaint
- The findings resulting from the investigation
- An admission or denial of the allegations
- A justification or rationale for our actions
- An explanation of any improvements made as a result of the complaint

Closing the complaint

Where the proposed decision or action is accepted by the complainant, the decision or actions will be carried out and recorded.

Dealing with unresolved complaints

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they can request escalation of the complaint to TJN's senior management. This notification should be made in writing to operations@taxjustice.net.

Details required in the notification are:

- Name and contact details of the complainant
- A short summary of the issue and actions relevant to the complaint
- Staff members involved in attempting to resolve the issue

- The action that the complainant is seeking to resolve the complaint (it is essential that the desired outcome is clearly stated to ensure that there are no misunderstandings)

Appeals process

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the decisions regarding their complaint, they can request an internal review of a complaint decision by the TJN board.

The appeals process for complaints is as follows:

- The appeal should be made in writing
- The appeal should set out the nature of the complaint, the steps already taken, details of the response received, and a statement as to why the complainant remains dissatisfied, without prejudice to any remedy which they are still seeking
- The person conducting the appeal will be more senior than the person who conducted the first investigation
- The internal reviewer will receive all of the complaint and investigation material, and any representations from the complainant on why the initial decision was incorrect
- The reviewer will conduct further investigations if they consider that the initial investigation was insufficient
- The complainant will be sent a further acknowledgement letter giving the contact details of the reviewer, the process to be followed, and timeframes for the appeal
- Once the internal review is complete, the complainant will be informed what the decision is and what the external appeal options are