

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Hands That Talk is committed to providing a high standard of service and to continuously improving this service. However, we recognise that there may be times when we will not live up to your expectations or our promises. When this happens, we ask you to tell us so that we can deal speedily with the problem.

Hands That Talk aims to provide high quality services to our members and other agencies and individuals in the voluntary and community sector.

If you are unhappy about any of our services we suggest that you contact the member of staff responsible for area of concern to see if the problem can be resolved to your satisfaction.

If you are not happy with the response, or if you are not sure which member of staff to contact, please follow the steps outlined below:

1. All complaints should be made to the designated person in writing by letter, video letter or email. This will be acknowledged within five working days.
2. The designated person will investigate the issues raised and respond within ten working days.
3. If you feel that the response is not acceptable, you have the right to ask for your complaint to be referred to the Management Committee. You will be advised of the date the committee meets and you may attend the meeting to make representation. You may also bring someone with you if you wish for personal support.
4. You will be advised of the committee's decision within five working days of its meeting.
5. Committee's decision is final.

HANDS THAT TALK COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (INTERPRETER SERVICE)

Stage 1 – Initial Complaint

1. Complaints and appeals must be made in writing, by e-mail or in a video letter normally within 30 days of the interpreting assignment taking place.
2. Complaints will be acknowledged by HTT within 5 working days of receipt. Further information will be requested if necessary.
3. The interpreter will be informed of the complaint and invited to comment.
4. The other party in the interpreting assignment may also be approached for information relating to the complaint if this is considered necessary.
5. Complaints will be considered initially by HTT's Complaints Panel.

6. If no further action is considered necessary, the complainant will be informed and reasons given.

Stage 2 – Disciplinary Panel.

7. If it is decided that there is a case to answer, the Complaints Panel will set a date for the hearing.

8. The interpreter and complainant will be given 15 days' notice and advised that s/he may attend the hearing and submit further written evidence if s/he so wishes.

9. The Panel may also seek further evidence or information on material facts which it feels are necessary to give full consideration of the complaint.

10. Decisions of the Panel and the appropriate action shall be sent to the interpreter and to the complainant within 14 days of the hearing.

Penalties

11. The Panel shall decide on the appropriate courses of action. Where the Panel finds reasonable justification for the Code of Ethics being breached, they will issue a formal written warning outlining the Panel's findings which will remain on file for 2 years. If another complaint is made within that 2 year period and, after the same process of investigation, this is upheld by the Panel, the interpreter's name may be removed from HTT's list of interpreters.

Stage 3 - Appeals

12. For any dissatisfaction with the decision an appeal to the Panel must be made within 28 days.

13. Appeals may be made on the grounds of: Errors in the procedure or conduct of the Disciplinary Panel The availability of substantial and relevant new evidence.

14. The Panel will consider the appeal and the interpreter will be invited to submit further information.

15. The decision of the Panel will be notified to the interpreter and the complainant within 14 days of the decision being made.

16. The decision of the Panel is final.

- Please note that the Western Health and Social Care Trust will be notified of all complaints about Hands That Talk in relation to health-related appointments.

Adopted on behalf of Hands That Talk by: James McKernan, Chairman