

The Royal Society of Biology aims to maintain high standards across all its activities.

The complaints procedure is aimed at addressing concerns of individuals and organisations. As well as addressing your concerns, it helps us improve the services we provide as an organisation.

## Types of complaint

Complaints to the RSB will fall into three main categories. These broadly relate to issues regarding our:

- Services and policies
- Staff
- Members

There are a number of ways that the Society can take a complaint forward.

### Minor complaints

These encompass minor and informal complaints on issues you may wish to bring to our attention or suggestions for a change to the Society's processes or policies. We take all complaints and suggestions seriously, and if any such complaint raises serious internal concern we may escalate this to a formal complaint process.

To contact us, you can write to the Chief Executive via the [CEO's PA](#), call us on 020 3925 3440 or write to 1 Naoroji Street, London WC1X 0GB.

### Major complaints

These will usually encompass the actions of our members, staff or volunteers and will, if deemed appropriate, trigger a formal internal process. Such complaints should be made in writing and be in line with the Society's Regulations and Code of Conduct which are available on our [website](#).

The complaint should be emailed to the [CEO's PA](#) or to our address:

FAO Dr Mark Downs  
1 Naoroji Street  
London WC1X 0GB

### Anonymous complaints

Unfortunately, we cannot accept anonymous complaints as this would significantly hamper our ability to reach a just conclusion. In all cases we will attempt to carry out an investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided. All complaints will be handled sensitively and with full confidentiality unless you specify otherwise. If disclosure of your identity is required, we will not do so without your consent unless required by law. You should understand that there may be times when we are unable to resolve a concern without revealing your identity, for example where your personal evidence is essential. While we take all complaints seriously, and all will be reviewed, if you are unwilling to reveal your identity we may be unable to take the complaint forward.

## Vexatious complaints

The RSB retains the right to terminate correspondence regarding vexatious complaints.

## How the RSB will handle your complaint

We will aim to acknowledge complaints within three working days, with a follow up within seven days giving an indication of the next steps in case there is the possibility for an investigation procedure. The CEO's PA, as far as is reasonably practical, provide any help to the complainant in understanding the complaints procedure.

The Society will initially investigate the complaint or allegation to determine if there is a case to answer. If we believe that the investigation of a particular complaint or allegation may require specialist knowledge we may consult an expert or external individual with appropriate skills to help with the investigation.

Minor complaints concerning any issues with, or suggestions about our processes will be dealt by staff in the appropriate department. Outcomes of any such internal investigation or action will be communicated with the complainant.

In cases of major complaints, for example against members or the CEO may be escalated to the Society's Honorary Secretary to determine if there is a case to answer, in line with the Society's [Regulation 3.9](#). In some cases, the Honorary Secretary may also wish to consult members of the Professional Matters Committee. If they believe there is no case to answer, on the basis that the complaint does not break any Society Regulations of Code of Conduct (which you can find on our [website](#)), the case will be closed and the complainant will be notified.

If the Honorary Secretary finds there is a case to answer, the disciplinary process will be triggered ([Regulation 3.9](#)). This process is confidential and will not be communicated with the complainant unless more information is required that could help the investigation. At the end of any such investigation, if deemed appropriate we may write to the complainant with:

- any action we have taken; and/or
- proposals to resolve the complaint.

We will not divulge the name of the complainant during an investigation unless we are specifically given permission to do so.

All confidential information in relation to the complaint will be handled sensitively. All staff have been informed how to recognise complaints if they are received in ways other than the formal ways specified above and to escalate these appropriately.

### After the complaint is processed

The Society will consider and aim to incorporate any suggested improvements to its practices into its procedures. All complaints will be dealt with in a manner which seeks to minimise the reoccurrence of such incidents. Outcomes of any complaints procedures may be used to influence further development of internal policies and strategy.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of any formal investigation you may submit an appeal. Appeals against a decision made by the Society will follow procedures set out in [Regulation 3.9](#). Appeals can be made against any penalty imposed to affected individuals but not against the findings of the investigation panel.

The Society's Council receives a report of any formal complaints following the completion of investigative procedures. All major complaints are logged for future reference.

**June 2021**