

UK Dermatology Clinical Trials Network Complaints Policy and Procedures

Scope:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure everyone at the UK DCTN knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

Policy:

1. Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

2. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with UK DCTN trustees.

3. Complaints Procedure of UK DCTN

Publicised contact details for complaints: Written complaints may be sent to UK DCTN, Applied Health Research Building 42, University of Nottingham NG7 2RD, OR by e-mail to ukdctn@nottingham.ac.uk.

4. Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media.

- Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.
- The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:
 - Write down the facts of the complaint
 - Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
 - Note down the relationship of the complainant to UK DCTN, e.g. member, sponsor
 - Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
 - Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
 - Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

5. Resolving Complaints

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to Chair of the UK DCTN Steering Committee (copying in the Independent Chair of the Executive Committee) within five working days.

On receiving the complaint, the Steering Committee Chair works with UK DCTN staff to record it in on file. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, an update should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Executive Committee level.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the UK DCTN Trustees. The request for this level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Trustees may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, an update should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint. The decision taken at this stage is final.

Further redress

If the complainant is not satisfied that their complaint has been investigated properly as the UK DCTN is a registered charity, the complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.

Variation to the Complaints Procedure

The Executive Committee may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Chair or individual trustee should not also have the Chair and/or trustee involved as a person leading a Stage Two review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Date Approved: 14th November 2023

Date for review: 14th November 2026