

Complaints procedure

The Nightingale Fund Council (NFC) is committed to resolving complaints in an appropriate, fair and timely way. We welcome feedback as this helps us to improve the way we work.

Introduction

The Nightingale Fund, established in 1857, exists to give financial support for course fees to nurses, midwives and community public health nurses who are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. It also supports health care assistants. The NFC receives applications from across the UK from those who wish to undertake further education and training to enhance their practice.

The NFC has limited resources and is unlikely to be able to award the full cost of a course and applicants are strongly advised to apply to other sources of funding as well.

Each year the NFC is able to help around 30 nurses with their course fees. The grant enables and supports applicants to enhance their day to day patient care and to assist them to meet their personal career aspirations. The NFC adheres to a strict anti-discriminatory policy and the amount awarded is considered by the council on an individual case by case basis.

The council meets 3 times a year in March, July and November. Details of dates for application are available on the NFC website. All applicants are interviewed either by telephone or in person. Furthermore, all applications and recommendations to issue an award and the amount of that award are considered at the full meeting of the council. Details on how to apply for the fund are available on the NFC website.

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the Nightingale Fund Council.

How to make a complaint

The Nightingale Fund Council is sorry if you are unhappy with anything to do with its work, but if you do have a complaint, please let us know so that we can try and help.

In the event that you are unhappy with either a decision not to issue an award, the amount of the award issued or any other part of the process, please follow the procedure outlined below.

In the first instance, please contact the council secretary where the matter may be able to be resolved informally. However, if the complaint cannot be resolved it can be raised formally by writing to the chair of the council:

Name:

Address:

What to cover

In order to help us to effectively investigate your complaint, please could you set out the facts in as much detail as you can and as clearly as possible. In particular, please tell us:

1. what happened
2. when it happened
3. who you dealt with
4. why you consider this to be a complaint
5. what you would like us to do to address your complaint.

We take all complaints seriously and we will be in touch as soon as we can once you've told us your concern. This policy reflects our commitment to ensuring that we have effective and transparent procedures in place for fair and efficient handling of complaints.

Confidentiality

All information provided in connection with a complaint will be handled sensitively. Information will only be shared with those who need to know and in line with relevant data protection requirements.

Please be assured that making a complaint will not affect your chances of applying and gaining an award in the future.

The NFC Complaints Process

On receipt of the complaint of a complaint:

- The chair, via the secretary, will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, normally within one working week of receiving the complaint
- The chair person will consider the complaint and where this is considered to be straight forward and not likely to result in either an award being made or an increase in the award, the chair person will respond to the complainant on behalf of the council within one month of receipt of the complaint. The chair will then table the complaint and response at the next meeting of the members
- Where the complaint is of a more complex nature or where the chair of council agrees that on considering the basis of the complaint, there is likely to either be an award or an increase in an award granted then this decision will be taken to the next available meeting of the council members to be considered in line with the policy for granting awards

Complaints about the behaviour of a council member (including the chair) should be made to the council secretary who will advise the member and the chair. The person being complained about will be asked to submit a written response to the allegation outlined in the complaint. Both the complaint and response will then be considered at the next available council meeting at which stage the subject of the complaint will be asked to exempt themselves from the discussion while the complaint is considered. A response to the complainant and the member who is the subject of the complaint will then be issued by the chair of the council, normally within 7 working days following the meeting. In the case of the chair being the subject of the complaint, the vice chair will chair the discussion and respond to the complainant on behalf of the council.

If the NFC is unable to give a definitive response within that timeframe, for example because an investigation has not been fully completed, we will send a progress report with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Complaints relating to any other issue should be made direct to the chair of the council who will respond to the complainant as outlined above. The response will be final and there is no right of appeal by the complainant

If you remain dissatisfied with our response, please refer to the Charity Commission's guidance publication 'CC47 Complaints About Charities' to see if they will investigate your complaint further (<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.asp>) or contact them at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk; or in writing at: Charity Commission, PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG

In certain circumstances, the NFC charity may decide or be required to pass a complaint onto regulatory or legal authorities (e.g. the Charity Commission or the police), for example, if there is a reasonable basis to suspect that an organisation or individual have acted illegally or if the NFC charity considers the complaint amounts to a Serious Incident that should be reported to the Charity Commission.