



## **Guidance for Patoss members who are respondents to complaints**

### **What complaints will Patoss investigate?**

Patoss will investigate any complaints concerning the professional competence of its members from whatever source. The Patoss complaints procedure relates:

- to specialist teachers who were members of Patoss at the time when the alleged cause for the complaint occurred;
- complaints which occurred subsequent to the adoption of the Patoss Code of Ethics and Conduct (date);
- allegations of a breach of specific section(s) of the Patoss Code of Ethics and Conduct (date).

### **How are complaints investigated?**

Most complaints received by Patoss can be resolved relatively easily after initial investigation of the complaint and mediation between the parties involved. The CEO and at least two qualified members acting as consultants will:

- gather written information
- clarify the nature of the complaint
- consider the views of both sides
- decide on a response

The response will be communicated to the complainant and the respondent (i.e. the member involved in the complaint).

Some complaints are more serious and/or more difficult to resolve. If a resolution is not achieved after the initial investigation, the complaint will be referred to the Patoss disciplinary panel, who will investigate the evidence, convene for a hearing of the complaint and reach a decision on the validity of the complaint and on any further action required.

In following the Complaints Procedure, Patoss will endeavour to find and utilise a collaborative approach to solving the difficulties which have led to a complaint, and will promote a solution which is fair and, where possible, agreeable to both/all parties involved.

**The complaints procedure is explained in more detail in the Patoss Complaints Procedure.**

## FAQs

### How long will it take?

- If a complaint is settled after initial investigation the process may take up to 6-8 weeks.
- If a complaint is referred to the Disciplinary Panel, the process may take up to 6 – 12 months.

### What shall I do if I am the subject of a complaint made to Patoss?

This is obviously a worrying position to be in and it is important to remember that:

- most complaints can be resolved relatively quickly
- Patoss is committed to finding an equitable solution.

It is important that in order to respond to the complaint you:

- Decide how you will respond within the required timescale
- Talk to your employer, supervisor, or union representative or a trustworthy colleague, who might be able to offer you help and support in dealing with the complaint
- Attempt to consider the complaint objectively rather than personally, reviewing all the facts rather than considering the motives of the person who has complained against you
- Assemble all **relevant** evidence which might include: documents (e.g. reports, lesson plans, letters, witness statements). notes (e.g. notes of progress, records of interviews. lesson notes, assessment plans and working papers, notes of telephone calls), correspondence
- Provide Patoss with a clear account of the circumstance pertaining to the complaint
- Consider issues of confidentiality and data protection when providing evidence. If the complainant has used the **complaints form** they will have been asked for their consent for you to send information pertaining to the complaint. If this is not the case Patoss can request the complainant's consent for you to send information relevant to the complaint in order for a resolution to be achieved. If any third party is involved you need to secure their consent before passing on sensitive information, or anonymise the information. Send only evidence which is relevant to the issue of the complaint. In particular if a child is involved or children, please think carefully whether you need consent from the child or children involved to release any information to Patoss.

- There may be a substantive reason why the complaint has been made. It is a good idea to address this and think about whether there is any redress you can offer, e.g. an apology or the production of a delayed report.
- If you need extra time to produce a response, you should inform Patoss and request this. Patoss will aim to act fairly in assessing such requests.
- If there are other investigations going on into the same allegations, e.g. by internal investigations by your employer, Patoss should be informed that this is the case.
- It is advisable not to contact the complainant directly at this point unless you cannot avoid doing so. If you need more information regarding the complaint, we suggest this is done through Patoss rather than directly from the complainant.