



SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY

SASLI aims to provide a high quality service to all who contact or are involved with the organisation including: SASLI Staff, users of Sign Language Interpreting services provided by SASLI members and SASLI members.

Well organised and efficient complaints procedures help us to improve services to the Deaf Community and serve to enhance quality and standards amongst our Sign Language Interpreter/Agency members. SASLI will endeavour to investigate all complaints in accordance with this policy and within the indicative timescales laid out in our policies.

SASLI is managed by volunteer charity trustees and in some instances longer periods may be required to investigate complaints. In the event that a longer timescale or alternative course of procedure is to be followed, SASLI will make parties aware of the reasons for this and the timescales / details of the timescale to be followed.

1. Complaints against SASLI:

SASLI seeks to ensure that all of its stakeholders are aware of how they can raise complaints in relation to SASLI's operations. Accordingly, where individuals or organisations have a complaint against SASLI or its staff or charity trustees, such complaints shall be dealt with in accordance with the details that follow:

1.1 Complaints by SASLI Staff:

All staff are provided with a copy of the internal SASLI grievance procedure under which they may raise any matters arising in relating to their employment with SASLI.

1.2 Complaints by users of Sign-Language Interpreting services:

Where persons or organisations other than SASLI staff or SASLI members wish to complain about the actions or decisions of SASLI or its staff, the **SASLI Complaints Procedure** (*attached*) should be followed.

1.3 Complaints by SASLI Members:

SASLI is a charitable company limited by guarantee and members have certain rights in relation to how SASLI operates. A number of these rights are contained within, and are properly dealt with in terms of SASLI's Articles of Association.

Separately, SASLI members are entitled to appeal decisions taken by SASLI relating to matters of accreditation, registration or adherence by a member to the SASLI Code of Conduct and Practice. (Such matters shall be dealt with by the SASLI Membership Sub-Committee).

2. **Complaints against interpreters / agencies involved in providing Sign Language Interpreting services:**

SASLI does not have any remit to investigate complaints against individual sign language interpreters or Agencies that are not SASLI members. If the complaint concerns a non-SASLI member or Registered Agency, contact should be made with the accreditation body to which that interpreter/Agency is registered.

Where an interpreter/Agency is a member of SASLI or a SASLI Registered Agency and subject to SASLI requirements relating to registration and maintenance of standards, it is not the case that SASLI can, or will, automatically get involved with all complaints that are directed at that interpreter/Registered Agency. SASLI will only become involved where a complaint concerns the failure of a member interpreter/Registered Agency to meet a specific SASLI standard or requirement.

2.1 **Complaints by users of Sign Language Interpreting services**

Where issues arise concerning interpreting services provided by member interpreters, most may be resolved by direct contact with the interpreter. If issues cannot be resolved in this way and the interpreter was booked through an Agency, the issue should be raised with the Agency. SASLI requires its member/Registered Agencies, as part of SASLI registration processes, to have in place and operate complaints policies.

Relevant to the above, users of Sign Language Interpreting services, may wish to note the Code of Conduct and Practice applicable to all SASLI member interpreters/Registered Agencies.

Where users of interpreting services are unable to achieve resolution of issues arising with an interpreter in terms of the above and, if an issue involves a SASLI registered member interpreter or Agency failing to meet specified SASLI standards or requirements, the matter can be referred to SASLI by way of a formal complaint in terms of the **SASLI Complaints Procedure** (attached).

Separate to the above, SASLI is, of course, at all times available to assist members of the Deaf community and users of sign language interpreting services, including providing general advice in relation to all matters relating to access and use of interpreters [including how to resolve issues that have arisen when using a particular interpreter or Agency.]

2.2 **Complaints by one SASLI member against another**

Where a complaint arises between SASLI members, SASLI will only become involved if a complaint relates to a member's failure to meet specified SASLI standards or requirements. If a complaint between members involves such a matter, the matter can be referred to SASLI by way of a formal complaint in terms of the **SASLI Complaints Procedure**.

3. **Further information in relation to SASLI complaint procedures**

Complaints should be submitted in writing; by email or by means of video letters.

SASLI exists to improve and enhance the standards of interpreting services in Scotland, particularly for the benefit of the Deaf community. Please contact a member of the SASLI team should you require any further information in relation to **SASLI Complaints Policy & Procedure** and/or how to submit a complaint.

PROCEDURE

The following are covered by this procedure.

1. **Complaints against SASLI**, including complaints relating to:
 - SASLI staff; or
 - The Board of Trustees or a particular Trustee
2. **Complaints against SASLI members** (including member interpreters and Registered Agencies). Please note that SASLI can only investigate complaints against interpreters/Agencies that are members of SASLI and SASLI will, under this procedure, only investigate complaints that concern the failure of a member interpreter/Agency to meet standards or requirements specified by SASLI.

Complaints should be submitted, in the first instance, to the Trustee on the SASLI Board designated as having responsibility for Complaints. Complaints should be addressed to:

Complaints Committee,
SASLI,
Baltic Chambers,
Suites 404 – 408
50 Wellington Street
Glasgow
G2 6HJ

Or submitted via email to mail@sasli.co.uk

If a Complaint relates to the Trustee with designated responsibility for Complaints, it should be submitted to the Vice–Chair of SASLI. Complaints should be addressed to:

Complaints Committee,
SASLI,
Baltic Chambers,
Suites 404 – 408
50 Wellington Street
Glasgow
G2 6HJ

Or submitted via email to mail@sasli.co.uk

Stage 1 – Submission of Complaint and Acknowledgement

- The Complaint is received.
- In the case of a Complaint against an interpreter/Agency member of SASLI, SASLI will check whether steps have been taken to resolve matters direct with the interpreter/Agency.
- In the case of a complaint against an interpreter/Agency member of SASLI, SASLI will check that the complaint concerns failure to meet a specified SASLI standard or requirement.
- An acknowledgement will be sent to the Complainant, indicating the identity of the person that SASLI proposes investigates the Complaint and the names of the individuals on the SASLI Complaints Committee that it is proposed will decide matters relating to the Complaint.
- The person complained of shall be informed:
 - (i) that a complaint has been raised;
 - (ii) of outline details of the matters complained of and the identity of the Complainant (**Note: Complainants should be aware that SASLI will, in most circumstances, require to disclose the Complainant's identity to the person complained of**);
 - (iii) of the identity of the person that SASLI proposes investigates the complaint; and
 - (iv) of the names of the individuals on the SASLI Complaints Committee that it is proposed will decide matters relating to the complaint.
- Provided that they respond within 5 working days of receiving notification, giving reasons as to why the person scheduled to investigate the Complaint or any other member of the SASLI Complaints Committee would not be neutral, the person complained of or the Complainant may request that SASLI Board make alternative arrangements for dealing with the complaint.
- SASLI may suggest alternative individuals to be involved in investigating/deciding on the complaint.
- If it proves impossible to agree on neutral persons on the SASLI Complaints Committee or SASLI Board to investigate and then decide on the complaint, the SASLI Board may appoint an external party to investigate matters.

Indicative Timescale: 1 – 3 weeks

Stage 2 – Initial Investigation

- Investigation of the complaint will commence. (*Note: to ensure effective governance, the SASLI Board will be updated to the effect that a complaint has been received. Where the complaint is of a serious nature the Board will also be provided with a very brief outline of the subject matter of the complaint. However, in order to ensure no conflict at any appeal stage, no detail will be provided to the SASLI Board*).
- Investigation will include:
 - Communicating with the Complainant, where possible by way of face-to-face meeting(s);
 - Communicating with any relevant individual(s) complained of, where possible by way of a face-to-face meeting;
- The complaint investigator will produce a report summarising findings in relation to the matters complained of and their recommendations as to any proposed actions (the Report).

Indicative Timescale: 6 weeks from acknowledgement of receipt

Stage 3 – Decision by Complaints Committee

- The Complaints Committee of the Board of Trustees (*to exclude the chair of SASLI so that they may conduct or coordinate any relevant appeal*), or such other body or person put in place pursuant to Stage 1, will make a decision in relation to the complaint based on the Report.
- Where necessary, prior to the above, the Complaints Committee, or such other body or person put in place pursuant to Stage 1, may request further investigation in particular areas, or discuss and make amendments to the Report, prior to reaching its decision.

Indicative Timescale: 3 weeks of the Report being produced

Stage 4 – Informing of Complainant and person complained of

- The Complainant and the person complained of shall be informed of the Complaints Committee's decision (subject to appeal). The person complained of shall be given full details of any action SASLI proposes to take if a complaint is found to be substantiated.
- The Complainant will also be provided with a summary of any action that SASLI proposes to take.

Indicative Timescale: within Timescale for Section 3

Stage 5 – Appeal of Decision

- The Complainant or the person complained of may appeal the decision of the Complaints Committee in writing to the Chair of SASLI (who shall not be aware of the detail of the complaint or have been involved in the decision taken in Stage 3) within 10 working days of receiving notification of the decision;
- The relevant sections of Stage 1 required to: (i) inform the Complainant and the person complained of how the appeal will be conducted and (ii) ensure neutrality of the Appeal Investigation and Decision shall be repeated.
- Stage 2 will be repeated with the Chair investigating or in circumstances where an issue of neutrality has been raised, such other person established pursuant to the processes set out in Stage 1.
- Stage 3 will be repeated but in place of the Complaints Committee, the Board (excluding members involved in the first decision) shall make the final decision. In circumstances where a complaint is between members and matters cannot be decided in this way, the final decision may be referred by the Board to the membership of SASLI at a General Meeting.
- The outcome of the appeal shall be communicated to the Complainant and the person complained of.

Indicative Timescale: Within 9 weeks of the Chair being notified of the exercise of a right to appeal (assuming matters decided by Board).