

BSBI Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

Prepared by & date	Julia Hanmer & Nominations, Awards and Governance Committee August 2024
Approved by & date	Board of Trustees, 17 September 2024
Next review date	September 2027 (3 year cycle)

BSBI welcomes all comments, compliments and complaints as we look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt and improve what we do. We value all feedback, whether you've had a great experience with us, want to make a suggestion on how we could do something differently, or want to let us know if something hasn't gone particularly well. Whatever it is, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

How to send feedback to BSBI

To send us a compliment, make a general comment or suggestion about an area of our work, you can contact BSBI by email, in writing or by telephone:

Email: enquiries@bsbi.org

Telephone: 07725 862957 (phone lines are open Monday to Friday, 10am to 7pm)

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland

WMT LLP Chartered Accountants

4 Beaconsfield Road

St Albans

Hertfordshire AL1 3RD

When contacting us, please provide us with as much detail as possible so that we can forward it onto the relevant staff member or officer and act on your feedback where appropriate.

How to make a complaint

We aim to provide an excellent service at BSBI. We expect all our members and staff to reflect and follow our values and principles. However, there are times when things can go wrong. This policy sets out how you can make a complaint and how your complaint will be managed. This will enable us to investigate promptly and improve the way we work.

The complaints policy covers:

- the quality or nature of the activities we provide
- the actions of BSBI staff, trustees or members including issues of inappropriate behaviour
- our adherence to our policies and guidance

You can find out more about our policies and guidance on our website, including the [governance page](#) and the [field meetings and indoor events page](#). The values and principles we expect our members to follow are outlined in as outlined in our [Strategy](#) (see section 1.2).

If you have a safeguarding concern, please contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead, as listed in our Safeguarding policy for [Adults](#) or for [Children and Young People](#).

How do I complain?

BSBI is committed to receiving your comments and complaints sympathetically, and where appropriate resolving the problem as amicably as possible. If you wish to complain, we encourage you to take the first step of resolving your complaint informally.

a) Resolving a complaint informally

An informal chat: Many complaints can be sorted out by talking the problem over with a member of the [BSBI staff team](#). An informal chat may resolve the problem or clear up any misunderstanding. Please talk to a member of BSBI staff in this case. By agreement with you, the staff member may record the main points of the discussion and give you a copy of this. You can decide together whether to inform or involve other staff members at this stage.

Discussion with Julia Hanmer, BSBI's Chief Executive. If you prefer to resolve the problem with BSBI's Chief Executive, please contact Julia (contact details below). She will arrange a mutually convenient time to meet to discuss the issue within 10 working days of being contacted.

b) Making a formal complaint

If the informal process has not resolved the issue, you can make a formal complaint following the procedures outlined below.

Stage 1: Please write to the Chief Executive (or the Honorary General Secretary if your complaint is about the Chief Executive) at the address below, with the following details:

- a summary of your complaint – what happened and when?
- If relevant, supporting evidence
- Where possible, please also let us know your desired outcome such as a request for something to be changed. Although we cannot guarantee this, knowing this will help us to look into your complaint
- A preferred contact method

We understand that making a complaint can be difficult and we will support you through the process and will keep your complaint confidential (see Confidentiality below).

We will contact you with an acknowledgment and tell you who is dealing with your complaint, what action we are taking to investigate it, and when you should expect to receive a response. The person investigating may ask for a meeting with you as part of this process. They may also need to speak to other relevant people. If we do this, we will inform you and ensure that any third party understands the importance of confidentiality.

Stage 2: if you are still not satisfied after receiving our response, you can ask for your complaint to be referred to the Honorary General Secretary, or to the Chair if the Honorary General Secretary is not available. Please make this request in writing within 21 working days of receiving our response to stage 1 of the procedure. The Honorary General Secretary will appoint a complaints panel consisting of three members of the Board of Trustees who have no previous involvement in the matter. The complaints panel will investigate your complaint and will hold an online meeting to discuss it with you. The panel will then consider your complaint and BSBI's response, including any recommendations for action. The decision of the panel will be given to you in writing.

Appeals Process: We hope that the formal process above will resolve your complaint. However if you wish to appeal the Stage 2 decision, you should write to the Honorary General Secretary or Chair within 21 days of receiving the complaints panel decision. The Honorary General Secretary will appoint an appeals panel, consisting of the President and two trustees who have no previous involvement in the matter. The appeals panel may investigate your complaint further and may hold an online meeting with you. Their decision will be given to you in writing. The decision of the appeals panel is final.

At all stages the time limits can be altered by mutual consent and if staff or trustees are on leave this will add to our response times (you will get an out of office notification in response to your email).

Confidentiality:

Anyone making a complaint has the right to confidentiality. If your complaint is resolved informally, details will be available only to the person you discuss it with and the Chief Executive and Honorary General Secretary. If your complaint involves other individuals, we will ask your permission to discuss it with them in confidence.

If your complaint is made through the formal procedure, only the Chief Executive (who would normally be investigating the complaint, unless it is against her), the Honorary General Secretary, the complaints or appeals panel and (with your permission) individual(s) referenced in the complaint, will know about its progress and its outcome. BSBI may also seek external expert advice (such as legal advice) as appropriate, in confidence.

Information gathered when looking into a complaint will only be used for the purpose intended and will not be shared without your knowledge or that of individual(s) concerned. It will only be shared on a "need to know" basis and will be kept securely, in line with our data handling policy.

Contact Information:

Louise Marsh, Communications Officer, enquiries@bsbi.org or 07725 862957

Julia Hanmer, Chief Executive, julia.hanmer@bsbi.org or 07757 244651

Honorary General Secretary, hongensec@bsbi.org

Chair of the Board of Trustees, chair@bsbi.org

Charity information:

The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (known as BSBI) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (8553976) and a charity registered in England and Wales (1152954) and in Scotland (SC038675). Registered office: WMT LLP, 4 Beaconsfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3RD, UK.