

Complaints, Compliments and Comments

Guidance

About this guidance: This guidance has been designed as a source to support creating a complaints, compliments and comments policy for youth work settings. It is guidance only and should be adapted for your organisation

Complaints, Compliments and Comments

1.0 Policy Statement

We are committed to delivering services with the highest standards of care and committed to ensuring ongoing organisational development to maintain excellence. Your complaints, compliments and comments help us to learn about, and improve, how we work.

This complaints, compliments and comments policy and procedures applies to anyone not working for the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to:

- young people
- funders
- parents and caregivers
- members of the public
- other organisations.

If you are an employee, volunteer or working for the organisation in another capacity, please see the relevant policy and procedure for your feedback.

2.0 Types of Feedback

2.1 Compliments

We strive to improve what we do, not only by making improvements when things go wrong but by building on our success. Therefore, hearing what we are doing well benefits individuals as well as the organisation. Compliments about the organisation help us to understand what is valuable and working well so that we can build on that success. We ensure any specific feedback reaches staff or volunteers so they can hear what you found great too.

2.2 Complaints

We define a complaint as: “an expression of dissatisfaction about our service, actions taken, or a lack of action taken, by or on behalf of the organisation”. Complaints may include but are not limited to:

- concerns about the quality or standard of service
- financial mismanagement or inappropriate fundraising methods
- inappropriate behaviour, poor treatment or poor attitude by someone working on behalf of the organisation
- non-compliance by the organisation to follow an appropriate policy or procedure, or a general dissatisfaction with them

2.3 Comments

We welcome any other thoughts, comments or feedback you have about what we do and the people who are doing it with us. Our organisation exists to make a difference and hearing what you think about what we do and how we do it, helps us continue to develop.

2.4 Anonymous Feedback

We encourage all feedback to be sent by a named person so that we can share thanks, follow up with you or share an outcome. However, anonymous feedback will be read and treated with the same level of appreciation and seriousness, although it may not result in the most comprehensive action.

3 Timeframe to Raise Your Feedback

3.1 Compliments and Comments

You can compliment us or give general feedback at any time.

3.2 Complaints

We encourage all complaints to be made as soon after an incident as possible. This helps us to act on your complaints in the most comprehensive way. If you are unable to do so immediately we ask that a complaint be made up to 12 months of either:

- the date the matter which is the subject of a complaint is about occurred, or
- if it was later, the date on which the complainant became aware of the matter.

The time limit will not apply if we are satisfied that there was a good reason for the complaint not being made within the time limit. Any complaints made beyond this time frame that are upheld will be considered historical complaints. Historical complaints will still be taken seriously.

In instances of historical complaints, we may be more limited in the information we can access during an investigation. However, we will still pursue a historical complaint if it is possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

4.0 Process for Actioning Your Feedback

4.1 Compliments and Comments

We will always do our best to acknowledge your comments and compliments. However, if we have been unable to, they are always appreciated and we strive for them to be passed on to any relevant parties internally.

4.2 Complaints

4.2.1 However you contact us regarding a complaint, you will receive a response and it will be dealt with in a timely manner. There will be an internal report made and any necessary action will be fully taken to resolve the complaint. We endeavour for all complaints to be resolved swiftly and completely.

Where possible and appropriate, please try and speak directly to the team or person involved. We hope that many of the complaints raised can be resolved by this direct approach, prior to an investigation. If you are unable to take this direct approach, please use the contact details outlined in section 5.2.

On receipt of a complaint, as outlined in section 3, we will:

1. acknowledge your complaint within three working days
2. carry out an internal investigation
3. provide a written response of our findings and any follow up action taken as soon as possible, but not later than a further 15 working days (20 working days total)
4. provide details of how to appeal the outcome of the investigation.

If the investigation is anticipated to take longer than the timescale outlined above, you will be notified of a revised deadline before the 15 working days expires. You will then be given a further date by which you can expect to receive a written response.

4.2.2 Complaints About the CEO or a Trustee

All complaints are taken seriously. This includes complaints about the CEO, Trustee or other senior leader of the organisation. However, we recognise the need to report these to the most appropriate person. See section 5.2 for who to contact.

4.2.3 Appealing an Unsatisfactory Response

An appeal must be submitted in writing within 15 working days from the date of the correspondence notifying you of the outcome, and must satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- you have new, relevant information (which you have not previously submitted)
- there is a failure to consider adequately, or at all, information you provided in connection with the complaint
- the conclusion and response to your complaint is unreasonable based on the information provided

On receipt of a legitimate appeal we will:

- acknowledge your appeal within three working days
- complete a further investigation that will be carried out by a different person to the initial investigation. This could be:
 - someone more senior within the organisation
 - a dedicated Complaints Officer
 - human resources
 - an independent external party e.g. an Ombudsman
- provide a written response of our findings and any follow up action taken as soon as possible, but not later than a further 15 working days (20 working days total)

If the investigation is anticipated to take longer than the timescale outlined above, you will be notified of a revised deadline before the 15 working days expires. You will be given a further date by which you can expect to receive a written response.

This outcome will be final. There are no further internal escalation channels. If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of your appeal, please see section 4.2.4 for how to escalate complaints externally.

4.2.4 External complaints

We strive to resolve all complaints internally and at the earliest opportunity. However, if you continue to be dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, including the appeal outcome, you are invited to raise your concern(s) externally.

Complaints can be raised with any relevant statutory body, including but not limited to:

- Council or Council Complaints Officer
- The Charity Commission
- The Fundraising Regulator
- Information Commissioner's Office
- Ofsted

4.3 Managing Your Information and Confidentiality

All written complaints will be logged in as much detail as is necessary. This includes the personal information of the person making the complaint. Information about individual complaints will only be shared with those who need access for a legitimate purpose. This includes staff investigating and responding to the complaint.

Steps will be taken to maintain your confidentiality, beyond the people who need to look into your complaint. On occasion your information may be shared with others internally as well as externally when we are legally required to do so. Your data will be handled in line with the Data Protection Act (2018).

5.0 How to Share Your Feedback

5.1 How to Contact Us

We encourage all feedback to be in written form, whether email or letter. If feedback is given orally we encourage it to be followed up in writing, particularly for complaints. This ensures the feedback is received in its truest form.

5.2 Who to Contact

Whether you have a complaint, compliment or comment we always encourage you to speak directly to the team or person involved first. See section 4.2 for more details on the process for raising a complaint.

If you have been unable to give feedback directly, below are the contact details for who to contact whether your feedback is about someone working on behalf of the organisation, the organisation and its services, or the CEO, trustee or senior leader.

Organisation contact details for complaints, compliments and comments:

