



CVSC Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy

Comments, Compliments & Complaints Procedure

Version	Reason for change	Date
1	Reviewed and updated	June 2017
2	Reviewed and updated	Dec 2020
3	Reviewed and updated	April 2021

These procedures apply only to users of our service and not to staff members, volunteers and members of the Trustee Committee who have other channels of communication open to them.

Introduction

As an organisation, Community and Voluntary Support Conwy (CVSC) aims to provide a quality service to local communities and groups in the County Borough of Conwy.

CVSC is fully committed to consulting with and listening to, the people that it serves. As a tangible demonstration of this commitment we encourage all users of our service to comment on the range and quality of the services provided. In turn, CVSC positively welcomes the receipt of such comments, as they provide an invaluable guide to the performance of the organisation.

It must be clearly stated and understood that every comment will be taken seriously and, where appropriate, investigated and acted upon.

As a general rule, CVSC has a “bottom up” approach. This means that in the case of a relatively minor complaint, the first contact should be with the staff member or volunteer responsible for the direct provision of the service. Only in the event of continued dissatisfaction would it proceed to the next stage. Such an approach seeks to encourage speedy resolution and to avoid ongoing, or escalating, conflict.

A log will be maintained of all comments, compliments and complaints, and there will be regular reports to the Board of Trustees.

Ratified by trustees: December 2021
Next review date: December 2024

Definitions

- **Comment:** This means neither compliment nor complaint, but constructive criticism of the way the service is organised, provided or can be improved upon. It can for example, include suggestions on meeting unmet need or about relationships with external organisations/groups.
- **Compliment:** This means generous and unsolicited praise regarding the conduct of a staff member or volunteer or about the quality of a service provided, or about the organisation in general. To be meaningful, it must be specific.
- **Complaint:** This involves the expression of dissatisfaction about one or more of the following:
 - The quality and nature of a service provided
 - The ability to provide a service
 - The lack of existence of a particular service
 - The conduct or demeanour of a staff member
 - The perceived level of efficiency of the organisation
 - The appropriateness of a response
 - The accuracy of information
 - The policies and/or procedures of CVSC

Note: a complaint must be specific, current/very recent and contain at least some evidence.

The Procedure

- **Comment:** These should be made either verbally or in writing and should, in the first instance, be considered by the staff member or volunteer directly in contact with the individual. In accordance with the guidance issued to them on these procedures, the staff member or volunteer will make a judgement as to whether the comment needs to be passed on to the Chief Officer. In any event, the individual must reserve the right to communicate directly with the Chief Officer. Comments will be acknowledged either verbally or, where appropriate, in writing. Where a comment leads to change - for example leading to a change in the way a service is provided - the individual will be informed of the outcome.
- **Compliments:** These will be received either verbally or in writing, and normally in the first instance by the staff member or volunteer directly in contact with the individual. In accordance with the guidance issued to them on these procedures, the staff member or volunteer will make a judgement as to whether the compliment needs to be passed on to the Chief Officer. In any event, the individual must reserve the right to communicate directly with the Chief Officer. Compliments will be acknowledged either verbally or, where appropriate, in writing.
- **Complaints:**
 - In all cases where a complaint is made, unless the complaint is of a very serious nature, every effort should be made by the staff member or volunteer in first contact with the complainant to resolve it quickly and informally. Unless the complaint is resolved immediately, every effort should be made to keep the complainant in touch and informed of the outcome. In the case of a complaint being made against a staff member or volunteer, they should inform the person to whom they usually report that a complaint has been made against them. The staff member or volunteer should make and retain a written record to include date, time, nature of complaint and efforts to resolve it.

In all other cases, the following procedure will apply:

- Where the complaint has been unsuccessfully resolved at this level, it should be referred to the Chief Officer. The Chief Officer will follow the above steps in an attempt to reach an informal and satisfactory resolution. The Chief Officer will enter details of the complaint in the log; this will include a brief summary of action taken and how the matter has been resolved. Where necessary, the Chief Officer will act as mediator and will personally seek the views of the parties involved in an attempt to secure a satisfactory resolution.
- Where the complaint is about the Chief Officer, it will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Chair will follow the steps outlined above.

Note: the above represent the “informal” stages. Unless there is good reason why the matter could not be dealt with within the time scale, all such complaints must be dealt with within 10 working days.

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Where a complaint remains unresolved, the matter will be dealt with “formally”. The procedure thereafter will be as follows:

- The complainant and/or her/his representative will be asked to write to the Chief Officer (or to the Chair in the event of the Chief Officer being the subject of the complaint) within 28 days, outlining details of the complaint.
- Within 28 days of receipt of the written details, the Chief Officer will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel. In the event of the Chief Officer being the subject of the complaint, the Panel will be convened by the Chair of CVSC.
- The Complaints Panel will comprise:
 - An Independent Chair
 - A member of CVSC’s Board of Trustees
- The complainant will be informed of the composition of the Complaints Panel, together with brief details of the members; such details will include personal experience, skills, expertise and reason for being involved.
- Where the issue is highly complex or technical, it is acknowledged that the Complaints Panel may need access to independent specialist advice. It may therefore be necessary under such circumstances to involve individuals who possess the relevant specialist knowledge to assist or advise in the process.
- CVSC will acknowledge in writing receipt of the written complaint within 5 working days.
- At least 10 working days’ notice of the meeting of the Complaints Panel (date, time, venue, etc) will be given in writing to the complainant.
- The Complaints Panel may receive evidence in writing or in person from the parties involved and/or their representatives.
- The deliberations and decisions of the Complaints Panel will be minuted.
- The Complaints Panel will conduct itself in an even-handed manner and will consider all aspects of the complaint and advise the complainant in writing and within 28 days of the meeting, of any decisions reached and of any appropriate action to be taken.
- The decision of the Complaints Panel will be final.