

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

Summary	
This document describes the policy and process by which members of the public or members of the church congregations can raise a concern or give positive feedback to improve our services across the organisation.	
Scope	
<p><b>In scope</b> Public, clients and organisations wishing to give feedback to New Community Network regarding our services, property, employees or volunteers.</p> <p><b>Out of scope</b> Employees or volunteers wishing to make a complaint separate whistle blowing and grievance policies apply for employees and volunteers.</p>	
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## 1. Introduction

New Community Network views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

This policy applies to individuals (members of the public) and organisations wishing to comment on, compliment or complain about any of the services and facilities, we provide or our employees, volunteers and trustees.

This policy does not apply to employees, volunteers, agency workers, interns, contractors, consultants and trustees wishing to make a complaint. They should refer to the relevant New Community policies e.g. Grievance Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and resolving problems policy.

## 2. Complimenting us

Compliments are valuable, and important to us and when they are received, they will be recorded and reported on. Compliments enable us to:

- understand what we do well and the positive difference this makes;
- provide positive feedback to our people – whether paid or unpaid;
- influence the continued development of what we do, why and how.

## 3. Commenting on our work

It is always helpful to hear what people think about what we do and how.

Compliments and comments are welcome because they:

- may help to influence the decisions we make;
- help maintain the standards of our activities;
- raise issues of real importance and can lead to change for the better.

Wherever we can, we will record and report, internally or externally as required, on comments we receive.

We have provided a website form for any person wishing to give us feedback through a compliment or comment at the bottom of our website page to offer a convenient way to communicate with us. You can also link to the form [here](#)

We will endeavor to acknowledge compliments and comments wherever possible but whilst this may not always be practicable, please be assured that they are always appreciated.

## 4. Complaints

We recognise that there will be times when our trustees, staff and volunteers or third parties working on our behalf make mistakes or get things wrong. Where this happens and where we receive a complaint, we will always take this seriously, record and report on it internally and externally if required, and deal with it in a timely manner.

We will always take steps to maintain the confidentiality of your personal information. We will only disclose it to people who need to look into your complaint, and, rarely, to others where we are legally permitted to do so, following any relevant data protection requirements.

Where it is unclear whether a communication is indeed a complaint, we will endeavor to confirm this with you, in so far as we can. If the communication or comment is made anonymously, we may not be able to treat it as a complaint under this policy.

### **Our policy for members of the public or other organisations to make a complaint is:**

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at New Community Network knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of New Community Network.

### **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from:

- Church members
- Parents
- Organisations, clients using our services
- Members of the public.

### **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Trustees and the senior management team of New Community Network.

## 5. New Community Network - Complaints Procedure

Complaints can be received through the following publicised channels:

### Website form

A link labeled 'feedback' at the bottom of the New Community Network website provides a convenient form to submit complaints online. You can also link to the form [here](#)

### In writing:

Written complaints may be sent to New Community Network, Operations Manager, Central Hall, St Mary Street, Southampton, SO14 1NF

### By telephone or in person

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to the Operations Manager on 02380 237700, or in person to a member of staff on-site who if unable to help will be able to direct you to the correct person on duty.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded. The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

### Write down the facts of the complaint

- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to the New Community Network (for example: client, member)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account through the website form or by post so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

## 6. Resolving Complaints

### Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Operations Manager within one week. Should the complaint involve that person directly, it should be sent to the Senior Leader.

On receiving the complaint, the Operations Manager normally records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint's procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

## Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Trustees level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair.

The request for Trustees level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Trustees decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

### **External Stage**

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk)

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

### **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.