



**Services for
Young People**

Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints Procedure

Policy Created by <i>(name and job title)</i>	Graham Thomas (Trustee)
Policy Approved by (name and job title)	Board of Trustees
Policy Live Date	November 2022
Next Review Date	November 2024

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	PURPOSE	3
3	SCOPE	3
4	Procedure and Key responsibilities	3
	SUGGESTIONS, COMPLIMENTS and COMMENTS	3
	COMPLAINTS – STAGE 1	4
	STAGE 2	4
	STAGE 3	4
	STAGE 4	4
5	Further guidance	6
	Appendix A.....	6
	Appendix B.....	8
	Appendix C.....	10
	Appendix D.....	11

Y SERVICES

Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints Procedure

1 INTRODUCTION

Y Services is committed to ensuring that all its young people and staff can live and work in a supportive and caring environment, demonstrating mutual respect, maximise each young person's potential and achievement.

2 PURPOSE

Y Services takes complaints seriously and the purpose of this procedure is to:

- Ensure we deal with all complaints quickly, thoroughly and fairly;
- Find a satisfactory resolution where possible;
- Explain our decisions;
- Learn from complaints and improve the way we deliver our services.

3 SCOPE

This is an organisation wide procedure and is for the benefit of all staff, volunteers and trustees, to ensure clear communication is provided to those accessing our services at all times.

4 PROCEDURE AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

SUGGESTIONS, COMPLIMENTS and COMMENTS

If a young person, external individual or organisation does not wish to make a complaint but would like to comment on the way we have dealt with an issue or make a suggestion for improving the way we work, this is welcomed. Compliments, comments and suggestions may be made verbally or in writing to the Chair of Trustees via info@yservices.co.uk

Anonymous complaints or requests for anonymity will normally prevent Y Services investigating the complaint.

A complainant may be a young person, external individual or organisation. If a complainant is a child or young person they will be given the opportunity to be accompanied during any meetings by a parent or guardian.

Detailed written records will be kept of all meetings related to the complaint.

This policy in no way replaces existing policies related to safeguarding and in all cases safeguarding take priority.

COMPLAINTS – STAGE 1

Initially we will try to resolve a complaint informally. The complainant may raise the matter with a member of the project staff who will endeavour to achieve a satisfactory solution. The member of staff will give them a copy of this procedure so they understand how they can make a formal complaint. If the complaint is from a child or young person the member of staff must talk them through the complaints procedure to ensure that they understand their rights.

All complaints received informally will be recorded on a Verbal Complaints Form (Appendix A)

STAGE 2

If the complainant remains dissatisfied they may raise the issue formally with a Worker In Charge/Senior Youth Worker. Verbal or written complaints will be accepted. Written complaints will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt.

The Worker in Charge/Senior Youth Worker will undertake an investigation of the complaint, including meeting with the complainant whenever possible, and send a full response within 10 working days. The response will include whether the complaint has been upheld, and if appropriate details of actions that Y Services is taking as a result of the complaint. It will not always be possible for details to be given, for example if the complaint is about a member of staff or Volunteer, Y Services cannot give details of any HR processes.

If in exceptional circumstances a complaint will take more than 10 days to investigate, the complainant will be kept informed of progress.

STAGE 3

If the complainant remains dissatisfied within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 2 they may raise the issue in writing with the Chair of the Trustees. The Chair or nominated Trustee will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and carry out a further review. A letter detailing the findings of the review will normally be sent within 10 working days. If the review is expected to take longer, the complainant will be advised when the Chair or nominated Trustee expects to be able to give a full reply.

STAGE 4

If the complainant is still dissatisfied, within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 3 they may request a complaints panel hearing. The panel will consist of a minimum of 2 members of the board of Trustees who will meet with the complainant at a convenient date. A date will be offered to the complainant within 10 working days of receiving their request for a panel. The complainant will be given an

opportunity to put their case to the panel, and a Senior Youth Worker or other senior representative. The complainant can be accompanied by a friend or family member to offer them support if they wish, guidance on the role of a companion is in Appendix C. The panel will consider all the evidence before them carefully, and send a written decision within 5 working days of the hearing.

Complainants may take independent advice at any stage of the procedure, for example from the Citizens Advice Bureau or a solicitor.

If further action required, please give contact details of complainant (name/phone / email / address)

--

Form completed by: Review signature:

Please pass completed forms to the relevant Senior Youth Worker. If further action is required, send a copy of this form within 3 days to the person responsible for completing the action(s) so that they can feedback to the complainant.

Senior Youth Workers please send a copy to trustees for recording.

Appendix B

Guidance for Trustees on a Complaints Appeal Panel

Remit of the Complaints Appeal Panel

The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or part
- uphold the complaint in whole or part
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the organisation's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

There are several points which any Trustee sitting on a complaints panel need to remember:

- The panel will hear the complainant and organisation's representative separately.
- It is important that the appeal hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so. No Trustee may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or with the circumstances surrounding it. In deciding the make-up of the panel, Trustees need to try and ensure that it is a cross-section of the categories of Trustee and sensitive to the 9 protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- The aim of the hearing, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the organisation and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised that the complainant may not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that their complaint has been taken seriously.
- An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.
- Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child or young person. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child or young person does not feel intimidated. The panel needs to be aware of the views of the child or young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults. Where the child or young person's

parent/carer is the complainant, it would be helpful to give the parent/ carer the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child or young person needs to attend.

- The Trustees sitting on the panel need to be aware of the complaints procedure.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the Clerk:

Any panel or group of Trustees considering complaints should be clerked.

The clerk will be the contact point of the complainant and be required to:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive for the hearing
- record the proceedings
- notify all parties of the panel's decision

The role of the Chair of the Panel:

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- the panel is open minded and acting independently
- no member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions
- written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

Notification of the Panel's Decision

The chair of the panel needs to ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response; this is usually within a set deadline which is publicised in the procedure. The letter needs to explain if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed.

Appendix C

Role of a Companion

Companions can:

- address the meeting, and put the complainant's case on behalf of the complainant;
- sum up the complainant's case;
- respond on the complainant's behalf to any view expressed at the hearing;
- sum up on behalf of the complainant at the end of the meeting;

Companions are not entitled to:

- answer any questions put to the complainant – these should be answered by the complainant, although companions may add to any response given where this may support or assist the complainant's answers;
- participate in any way that the complainant has indicated they don't wish for them to do – such as speak when the complainant clearly doesn't want them to;
- disrupt the meeting or its progress.

If the companion is accompanying a child, the child will be asked at the beginning of the meeting if they want their parent/accompanying adult to speak on their behalf.

Appendix D

Procedure Flow Chart

The following flow chart is designed for staff to follow should a person wish to make an in-person complaint/comment. Referral should be made to the 4 stage process featured on page 4/5 throughout the process, to ensure consistency.

Any email complaints received should be forwarded directly to the relevant Senior Youth Worker who will send it on to the relevant Trustee.

