

Client Complaints and General Feedback Policy

1. Policy Statement

1.1 New Mills and District Volunteer Centre (NMVC) is committed to providing a high level of service to everyone involved with its operations.

We welcome all feedback and do not view complaints as unwanted. We are firmly committed to a process of continuous improvement of which the complaints procedure is just one element.

1.2 Recognising that sometimes things go wrong, or mistakes are made, this policy outlines the procedures to follow to make a complaint and the internal procedures we follow to manage the process.

1.3 This procedure will be available on our website and will form part of the induction process for staff, volunteers and trustees. A copy will be sent to anyone making a complaint.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this complaints and general feedback procedure are to ensure that:

2.1 Any complaints that are received are investigated at the appropriate level in the organisation,

2.2 All complaints are actioned in the most expeditious way,

2.3 Persons making complaints or comments know how their complaint or comment will be dealt with

2.4 Wherever possible, lessons are learned.

3. Feedback

3.1 If a client would like to give some feedback, whether this is positive or negative, then they should feel able to do so. Any kind of informal feedback must be, wherever possible, received by the associated staff member, and this can be done in writing, over the phone or in person. Positive feedback is always gratefully received, and it is good to share these successes with the rest of the staff team.

3.2 If a client has a simple comment or suggestion on how we could improve any aspect of NMVC's services, or any constructive or negative feedback, we would still like to know about it as it may help us deal with something we would otherwise overlook. Minor issues can often be put right very quickly. Again, this can be done in writing, over the phone or in person. It is important at this stage to ascertain whether the person giving this negative or constructive feedback would like to log this as a formal complaint, or simply some feedback. If it is the former, then the complaints procedure must be adhered to.

3.3 Training will be provided to all staff and volunteers in dealing with all reported issues and misunderstandings with a view to resolving them as soon as possible. Members of staff will record all issues dealt with in this way. The client's name will not be included, and the staff member will make an objective judgement on the cause of the problem. Issues raised in this way will be analysed on a regular basis as part of our process of continuous improvement.

4. Complaints Process

Please note all correspondence about complaints will be **treated as confidential**.

4.1 Raising the complaint

Clients wishing to make a formal complaint are asked, if possible, to write or email an explanation of the issue that has caused them to be dissatisfied. Support can be provided to do this, if required.

A complaint should also contain an explanation of what the person making the complaint would like to be done to resolve the issue.

Complaints should be sent to the Centre Manager in order to register them within the procedure.

Via post: New Mills & District Volunteer Centre
33-35 Union Road
New Mills
SK22 3EL

or via email: mark@nmvc.org

If writing, the envelope should be marked '*CONFIDENTIAL*'. To progress any complaint, we will need a name, a contact address and a telephone number.

The Centre Manager will send an acknowledgement within 7 days, and endeavour to resolve the complaint at this stage.

4.2 Our response

When the Centre Manager has considered the detail of the complaint, the person raising the complaint will receive a written response detailing any proposed remedial action.

This will be done within 14 - 28 days of the receipt of the original complaint. If this is not possible, the Centre Manager will explain this in writing within the 28 days.

NB - If the Centre Manager is specifically mentioned in the complaint, the matter should be directed to the Chair of Trustees.

4.3 Escalating your complaint

If the complainant remains dissatisfied the Centre Manager will refer the complaint to the Chair of Trustees for review, unless such person is specifically mentioned in the complaint, in which case it will be referred to a Trustee of the organisation.

Following this second review, the person raising the complaint will be provided with a written response detailing any changes to the previously proposed remedial action.

Please note that this second review will be the final position of New Mills and District Volunteer Centre. However, NMVC will communicate at this stage if there may be other routes available via external bodies to the complainant.

4.4 Due process

If an accusation is made that this procedure has not been followed, the matter can be raised for discussion at a Trustee meeting by contacting the Chair of the Board of Trustees **in writing:**

FAO Chair of Trustees
New Mills and District Volunteer Centre
33-35 Union Road
New Mills
SK22 3EL

The Trustee meeting will not consider the substantive matter because this may invalidate the second review process but may refer the whole matter back to the first stage and ask for a report to make sure that the full procedure is followed.

4.5 Withdrawing the complaint

If, at any stage, the client making the complaint wants to stop a complaint from being progressed, they can do by contacting the Centre Manager by letter or email. NMVC reserves the right to continue to investigate serious complaints in these circumstances.

5. Integrity

During the process of dealing with a complaint we will be as open and transparent as possible. People raising complaints will be given full information about the progress of their complaint except in the situations mentioned below.

5.1 If the complaint involves questions about the actions or competencies of individual members of staff or trustees, other processes may subsume the complaints procedure and NMVC may not be able to provide the person raising the complaint with all the relevant information. (For instance, employment legislation may prevent publication of the results of disciplinary processes)

5.2 The legal requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowers) may restrict the information that can be provided to persons raising complaints.

If either of these situations occurs the Centre Manager will provide an explanation without disclosing any restricted information.

The complaint will be dealt with, investigated and responded to by someone independent from the issues and people raised in the complaint. This would normally be the Centre Manager, however if they aren't considered independent a Trustee may lead the response to the complaint.

To ensure confidentiality, information about the progress of a complaint will only be provided to the person making the complaint.

6. Continuous Improvement

NMVC always seeks to develop and improve its procedures, which will include information received from this process. NMVC would appreciate feedback from complainants about their experience of our complaints procedure and may use this to improve the way complaints are managed in the future.

APPENDIX A - COMPLAINTS PROCESS FLOW CHART

