

Policies and Procedures

Comments and Complaints Policy

Version 14 - 20/04/2023

Comments and Complaints Policy

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Comments and Complaints Policy

Policy Statement

Community Integrated Care's ethos is one of openness, honesty and integrity and it is within this spirit that we encourage and embrace all comments and complaints.

To us, your comments and complaints really matter.

We promote a culture where comments and complaints are welcomed, and we value everyone as an opportunity to learn, develop and change. That's why we will always thank you for voicing your comments or complaints and for giving us the chance to improve the service we deliver. Your suggestions and compliments allow us to share and embed good practice.

At the heart of our approach is a genuine desire to *experience what our customers have experienced*. Only by seeing things through your eyes can we truly understand your complaint, and work to put things right in way that is best for *you*. We believe in making our approach personal to you and your specific comments or complaints.

We recognise how difficult it can be to make a comment or raise a complaint so compassion is key: we promise that you will be listened to, heard and understood and that your relationship with us will not be compromised by telling us what you think.

What are comments or complaints?

We have a really wide definition of both comments and complaints - so that there is always a procedure through which all customers can give us their feedback - and through which we can guarantee that your comments or complaints will be dealt with efficiently and effectively.

We view **complaints** as any genuine expression of dissatisfaction about our charity – be that minor or more serious which requires further investigation. **Comments** are any remarks, observations or criticisms that may require immediate action but do not require a full investigation.

Who can make a comment or complaint?

Ultimately, we believe that any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in our charity has the right to tell us how they feel in instances where we are not meeting the standards they expect of us (and indeed that we expect of ourselves).

Generally though, comments or complaints will come from any of our customers – who we define for the purposes of this Policy as: the people we support, their friends, relatives or advocates; partners or agencies we work with; or members of the communities in which we work.

Comments and Complaints Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Job Role/Group	Responsibility
All Colleagues	Adhere to this procedure and to ensure that complainants are treated courteously and with respect and in accordance with stated timescales. Where appropriate, colleagues should assist complainants to raise a complaint.
All Managers	Ensure comments, compliments and complaints are dealt with in line with this procedure within their service.
Quality and Performance Specialist	Day to day administration of the procedure.
Complaints Manager	Day to day responsibility for the management of this procedure.
Chief Quality and Risk Officer	Ensure that analysis of comments, complaints and compliments is undertaken and communicated.
Quality and Standards Control Group	Review trends and to use the knowledge gained to improve services.
Chief Executive	Ultimate responsibility for the standard of care and support within the charity lies with the Chief Executive.

Who is affected by this policy?

- 1.1. **People We Support:** this includes people currently using our services, those who have in the past, and anyone whose contact with Community Integrated Care is concerned with their wellbeing or having been a consumer or potential consumer of services.
- 1.2. **People directly associated with those we support** in a personal capacity — their relatives, friends, visitors and representatives.
- 1.3. **Colleagues:** including temporary colleagues, volunteers and office-based workers where appropriate.

Comments and Complaints Policy

Key Knowledge

Policy

- Every person we support and those directly associated with them has the right to make a complaint or give their views and will be supported to do so if necessary. We also welcome complaints and feedback from other professionals or people living in the community about our services.
- We encourage and embrace all complaints and comments and see them as an opportunity to learn and develop.
- All colleagues will be open, non-defensive and transparent in their handling of any comment or complaint.
- People making complaints or comments will be treated with respect and sensitivity.
- People have the right to complain anonymously if they wish.

Procedure

- Complaints can be made in any way suitable to the person making the complaint.
- All complaints must be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt.
- How the complaint is dealt with, by who, and in what timescales, are to be agreed with the complainant on an individual basis.
- The Investigating Officer must be a person impartial to the complaint.
- Complaints must be dealt with quickly and efficiently; resolved at the earliest opportunity and in a time period which is relevant to the particular complaint.
- For more serious complaints, consideration should be given to the investigation being conducted by a person based in a different region to that in which the complaint is made.
- Outcome responses and any actions taken will be communicated at the earliest opportunity and by the method the complainant chooses.

Our Approach

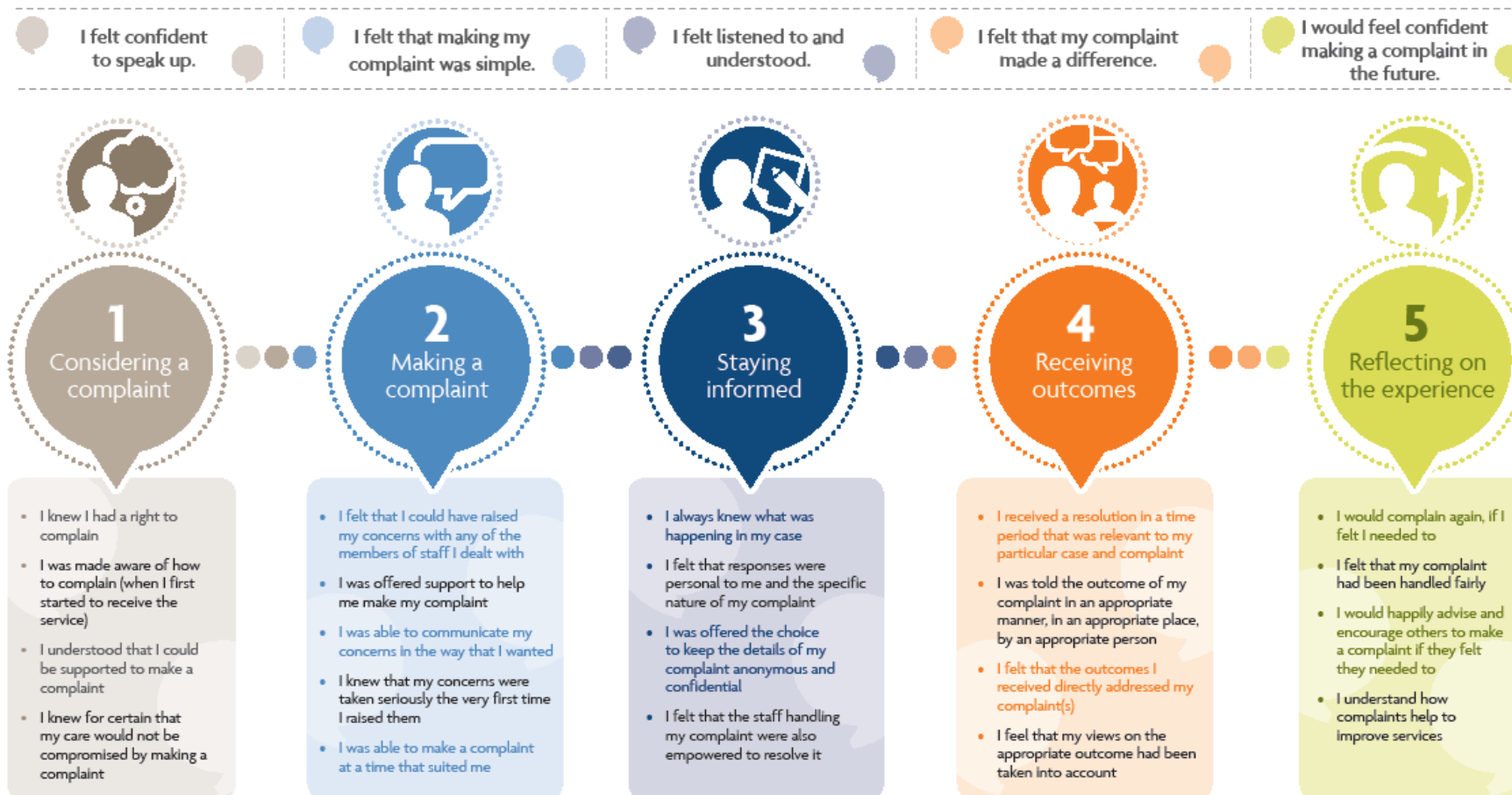
Our Values

Value	How it applies to this policy
Respect	We encourage the views and input of people we support and others to improve the way we resolve complaints.
Enable	We deal with problems with a “can-do” attitude, working to resolve conflicts in a positive way for all.
Aspire	We aim to deliver the best customer experience possible. How we handle customer feedback is a significant part of achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty.
Deliver	By learning and reflecting on our customers’ feedback we can deliver the best possible services for the people we support and the partners we work with.
Include	Everyone with an interest in our organisation has the opportunity to give us their feedback if we aren’t meeting the standards they expect of us.

We also support a care sector developed ‘**User-Led Vision for Raising Concerns and Complaints**’¹:

¹ As published by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, the Local Government Ombudsman and Healthwatch England in December 2014.

A user-led vision for raising concerns and complaints



Key Principles

With this vision in mind and our organisational values, our Comments & Complaints Procedure centres on these key principles: -

- We will provide a **fair and transparent** procedure that is **simple, easy to understand** and **straight-forward to use**.
- **Our procedure will never be one-size-fits-all**. It will be flexible to the person making the complaint and the type of complaint they have.
- We will **publicise** our complaints procedure, so that our customers know that they can make a complaint and how to do so.
- Our colleagues will understand the **importance of customer satisfaction and loyalty** and how proper handling of complaints helps support these.
- Our approach to dealing with complaints will be **communicated clearly to all colleagues**. All colleagues will understand how to support a person to make a complaint and know what to do if they receive one.
- Every person making a complaint will be treated with **respect, fairness and sensitivity**. Complaints will be able to be expressed freely and without prejudice.
- Every person making a **complaint will have the right to remain anonymous** if they wish.
- All complaint information will be kept **confidential and handled sensitively**, telling only those who need to know.²
- **People will feel assured** that raising a complaint will never negatively affect the service they receive from us or the relationship we have with them.
- We will ensure that complaints are investigated **fairly and in timely way**. We will keep people regularly updated on the progress of their complaint, proposed actions and timeframes.
- We will make every attempt to resolve complaints or problems at the **earliest possible stage** and that where possible, relationships are repaired.
- We will have a **robust approach to gathering and analysing information** about complaints which helps us improve what we do.
- We will **monitor all complaints** to ensure we identify key trend; address areas for improvement and monitor quality and consistency.

² And for any data protection requirements

- We will always **thank our customers** for taking the time to share their comments or complaints with us and will always let them know when they have helped us address a problem and that we will use this to help us be a learning organisation.

It is the responsibility of all colleagues to adhere to this Policy and to ensure that complainants are treated courteously and with respect and in accordance with stated timescales. Any contravention of our principles by any colleague will become a disciplinary matter.

Other important information

This Policy is underpinned by the charity's Equality and Diversity Policy. People we support, relatives, colleagues and all other stakeholders must be treated equally irrespective of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and disability.

All managers and colleagues will be informed of any complaints against them at the appropriate stage and informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Our Policy and Procedures meet the requirements laid out by both the Care Quality Commission and Care Inspectorate (Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland) or other relevant regulatory body.

Where a complaint involves an allegation which could have an impact on safeguarding people we support, the appropriate safeguarding procedures must be followed.

Where a complaint involves a notifiable safety incident relating to care and treatment, the appropriate Duty of Candour policy and procedure must be followed.

Speak Out criteria issues raised by the Speak Out process will be handled as a complaint if appropriate to the nature of the issue concerned, or by the Grievance or Safeguarding/Adult Support and Protection processes as necessary.

Colleagues should only use the policy with regard to care of people we support as it is not a substitute for the charity's HR Policies. If colleagues wish to raise a complaint relating to their own circumstances, they should follow the Grievance procedure (HR 12.1)

Appendix 1: Definitions

Concern – an expression of worry or doubt about an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.

Comment – remarks, observations or criticisms that may require immediate action but do not require a full investigation. These are usually verbally raised. This is also referred to as an informal complaint.

Complaint - an expression of dissatisfaction, whether verbal or written, and whether justified or not and which requires further investigation.

Appendix 2: Contact Details

A complaint may be made to the **Local Authority** contracts unit or funding body paying for the service, details can be provided by the manager of the service.

In England, the complainant has the right to refer the complaint to the **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman** if they are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation.

In Scotland, the complainant has the right to complain directly to **Care Inspectorate** for the complaint to be investigated or to the **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman** if they are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation.

Community Integrated Care

Quality Department
Old Market Court
2 Miners Way
Widnes
WA8 7SP

Telephone: 0151 420 3637
Email: quality@c-i-c.co.uk
www.c-i-c.co.uk

English Services

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

53-55 Butts Road
Coventry
CV1 3BH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Care Quality Commission

CQC National Customer Service Centre
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

Telephone: 03000 616161
www.cqc.org.uk/content/contact-us/how-complain/complain-about-service-or-provider

Local Authority

You can find the contact details of your local council by visiting the website at www.gov.uk

There may be some circumstances when a person can take their complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. This body has a limited role and will only be able to deal with a complaint about a public service, i.e. the NHS, local authorities, housing associations and only when the internal complaints procedure has been fully exhausted. The ombudsman's office can look into complaints about administrative failures, failure to provide a service and a failure

in a service in these failures cause hardship or injustice to a person. Community Integrated care is not a public service but, for example, the local social work department and the care inspectorate are public services. A person might complaint about Community Integrated Care's services to the local social work department or the Care Inspectorate. If a complainant feels that they did not deal with their complaint properly, then they can complain about this to the ombudsman.

Scottish Services

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Freepost SPSO

Telephone: 0800 377 7330

www.spsso.org.uk

Care Inspectorate

Compass House

11 Riverside Drive

Dundee

DD1 4NY

Telephone: 0345 600 9527

Email: concerns@careinspectorate.gov.scot

www.careinspectorate.com

Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland

91 Haymarket Terrace

Edinburgh

EH12 5HE

Telephone: 0131 313 8777

People supported and carers Freephone: 0800 389 6809

Email: enquiries@mwscot.org.uk

<http://www.mwscot.org.uk>

Appendix 3: Legislation and Regulation

Legislation and helpful guides

CQC Complaints Matter

Health and Social Care Act 2008

Guidance on Good Practice guides – Local Government Ombudsman

Principals of Good Complaint Handling - Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

A guide to better customer care – Department of Health

SSI 2011/210 Social Care

Regulation

Care Quality Commission Fundamental Standards; Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 England and Wales (for all regulated care services)

- Regulation 16: Receiving and acting on complaints
- Regulation 20: Duty of candour

Reference: www.cqc.org.uk/content/fundamental-standards

Health and Social Care Standards: My support, my life.

- 1: I experience high quality care and support that is right for me
- 2: I am fully involved in all decisions in all decisions about my care and support
- 3: I have confidence in the people who support and care for me
- 4: I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support
- 5: I experience a high-quality environment if the organisation provides the premises

Health and Social Care Principles:

Responsive care and support

- If I make a complaint it is acted on.

Reference: <http://www.newcarestandards.scot/>

Linked Policies and Procedures

Comments, Complaints and Compliments procedure England.....	QD1.1a
Comments, Complaints and Compliments procedure Scotland.....	QD1.1b
Complaints Procedure Easy Read	QD1a
Safeguarding Adults at Risk (England) policy	QD6
Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) policy	QD7
Safeguarding Children (England) policy	QD8
Child Support and Protection (Scotland) policy	QD9
Grievance procedure.....	HR12
Speak Out procedure	QD1.3
Duty of Candour Scotland	QD16.1
Duty of Candour England	QD16.2

Appendix 4: Document Information Sheet

Policy or Procedure Title*	Comments and Complaints Policy
Reference Number*	QD1
Description	Management and resolution of comments and complaints to improve service delivery and customer satisfaction.
Version* and Active Date*	Version:14– Date: 20/04/2023
Document Author	Nicola Catterall, Danielle Chan
Document Lead*	Nicola Catterall
CIC Department*	Quality and Risk
Related Policy/Procedure	HR12, QD1.3, QD1a, QD1.1a, QD1.1b, QD6,QD7,QD8, QD9, QD16.1, QD16.2
Date of Last Review	20/04/2023
Keywords	Complaints, complaint, comments, compliments, concern, speak out, whistleblow, whistleblowing, duty of candour, grievance
Template Version	16

Applicability Matrix

Service Type

Registered LD Service	✓	Supported Living	✓	Residential Care Home	✓	Residential Nursing Home	✓
Respite Care	✓	Intermediate Care	✓	Extra Care	✓	Day Care	✓
Support at Home	✓	Support in the Community	✓	Support Services (Head Office)	✓		

Client Group

Learning Disabilities	✓	Mental Health	✓	Older People	✓	Autism	✓
Dementia	✓	Sensory Impairment	✓	Physical Disabilities	✓	Acquired Brain Injury	✓
Children	✓	Adults	✓	England	✓	Scotland	✓