

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1 OUR COMPLAINTS POLICY: AREAS COVERED

1.1 This document covers complaints made by customers and other interested parties about the services offered by Community Resolve. It should be noted that these procedures do not cover:

- Specific reference to Community Resolve’s provision of accredited training, appeals against assessment decisions, which are covered by Community Resolve’s Learner Appeals Policy.
- Complaints about or allegations of malpractice and maladministration, which are covered by Community Resolve’s Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedures.

1.2 A complaint may be made about:

- Community Resolve’s services, systems, processes and procedures.
- The actions or behaviour of Community Resolve employees and Trustees
- The operations or actions of external agencies or individuals contracted by Community Resolve to supply services on its behalf

2 STATEMENT OF INTENT

2.1 Community Resolve is committed to providing a consistent, high-quality service. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards. We aim, therefore, to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a clear response.
- In dealing with complaints we take account of our equality and diversity policies.
- We deal with complaints promptly, fairly and confidentially.

- We respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, an apology where we have got things wrong, where appropriate recompense, and with clear information on any action that we will take.
 - All complaints and their outcomes are recorded.
 - All staff are trained to assist users and are able to resolve problems at the earliest opportunity
 - In the formal complaint process, no-one involved in the actions or behaviours complained against is involved in determining the outcome of a complaint; no-one involved in determining the outcome of a complaint is involved in determining the outcome of an appeal.
- 2.2 Where possible, complaints should be dealt with informally with an appropriate member of staff or Trustee.
- 2.3 As a complainant, you have a right to support from an independent advocate or friend at any point during the process of the complaint.
- 2.4 The procedures set out below may need to be adapted to accommodate the type of complaint. Any necessary adaptations will be mutually agreed between you and Community Resolve in accordance with the principles stated above.

3 IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1 In order to implement this policy we will ensure that:
- The policy is communicated to all employees through induction, training, team briefings, and displayed within staff handbook and job descriptions.
 - All individuals who are the target of/are directly involved with the operations of Community Resolve in various capacities are made aware of the content of this policy.
- 3.2 Where external agencies are involved in the delivery of Community Resolve's provision, and where the services of such agencies have a direct impact on Community Resolve's customers (in such instances as the accreditation of training), Community Resolve will endeavour to check that relevant staff and customers are made aware of the contents of the policies and procedures of such agencies.

4 INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

Whichever member of staff or Trustee receives your complaint, this will be referred to the appropriate member of staff or Trustee, or to a senior manager if it is unclear who the complaint should be taken to. If you would prefer not to speak to someone who was involved in the situation, then you should recourse to the formal procedure set out below.

Where a complaint is made in an informal way, we will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within forty-eight hours, informing you of any actions being taken, and will aim at providing you with a response within seven working days. This period may be extended if the complaint is particularly complex or where the procedures are delayed due to exceptional circumstances (for instance, if the persons concerned are not available at the time). If this is the case, you will be notified of when to expect a full reply.

At the end of this procedure, we will communicate our response in writing.

Where a complaint is deemed to be of a serious nature, an appropriate senior manager will decide whether or not it should be dealt with through the formal procedure set out below.

Records of your complaint (i.e. your details, a description of your complaint, and any other details which are deemed relevant) will be made, whether the complaint is made in writing or orally.

5 FORMAL COMPLAINTS

Where a complaint is of a serious nature, such that it cannot be resolved informally, is regarded as formal.

A formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the CEO¹, who will refer it to an appropriate senior manager. Where a formal complaint is made orally (for instance, by telephone), a note of the complaint will be made; you will then be asked to submit your complaint in writing.

In your complaint you should include:

- your name, address and contact details;

¹ Full contact details can be found on our website at www.communityresolve.org.uk

- details of the complaint;
- supporting information which you wish us to consider (for instance, relevant documentation)
- details of any previous attempts to resolve the problem
- what action, redress or recompense (if any) you seek

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within seven working days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
2. A designated senior manager will then investigate your complaint.
3. You should get a response and an explanation, including suggestions for resolving the matter, within fourteen working days.
4. We will also invite you to a meeting to discuss our response and hopefully resolve any remaining issues you may have. As per 2.3, you have a right to bring an independent advocate or friend to the meeting.
5. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.
6. Within seven days of any meeting arranged to discuss the complaint we will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions/actions that were agreed with you.

Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you should contact us again and we will arrange for a member of our Trustee Board to review the decision. Where the complaint is about the CEO, the decision will be reviewed by the Chair of the Board.

1. Your appeal should be submitted in writing to the CEO (or the Chair of the Board) within two weeks of receipt of the response, and should state the grounds on which you are appealing, and what action, redress or recompense you are seeking.
2. We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your request for a review within seven working days of receiving it, and invite you to an appeal hearing. As per 2.3, you have a right to bring an independent advocate or friend to the hearing.
3. Within 5 working days of the hearing, we will write to you confirming the outcome of the appeal and the actions that will be taken (if any).

4. Where an appeal requires further investigation, you will be informed of the reasons for the delay, and explained what further steps will be taken in order to resolve the matter.

We will endeavour to complete the appeal within twenty working days of receiving your request for a review, and sooner where possible. Should you not be satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, you may ask for a review from an independent party.

6 SUCCESSFUL COMPLAINTS

Where any part of a complaint is held, in addition to providing the complainant with a response and where appropriate redress, we will endeavour to make all the adjustments which are deemed necessary in order to improve our service. In extreme circumstances, we may recourse to internal disciplinary procedures where the actions or behaviour of a member of staff is deemed inappropriate.

7 CONFIDENTIALITY

Community Resolve will not disclose any information about you or your complaint to third parties where this would constitute a breach of confidentiality. If you wish to remain anonymous, Community Resolve will investigate your complaint in accordance with relevant whistle-blowing legislation.

8 REVIEW

Community Resolve will review this policy and associated procedures annually, and revise them as and when necessary in consultation with the Trustees.

reviewed: 06/10/2014
Next review due by: 06/10/2015
Reviewed by S Hart 1.7.15
Next review due by 1.7.16