



Complaints and Positive Feedback Policy and Procedures

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Approved by (Operational)	Dominic Ellison Chief Executive Officer

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Complaints and Positive Feedback Policy

1. Purpose of Complaints and Positive Feedback Policy

1.1 WECIL is committed to serving its members and community in the best way possible and recognises that both positive feedback and complaints can help us to reflect on and improve, the quality of the services we provide.

1.2 WECIL treats any complaints about its services very seriously. This policy aims to be open and accountable and to provide a prompt, considerate and confidential response to any such complaints. WECIL aims to use this Policy and its procedures to identify where things are going wrong and to put them right for the future.

1.3 It is accepted that complaints would most likely come from people who use our services, but others not directly in receipt of services may also have cause to complain about WECIL's actions or lack of action (partner agencies, parents/carers etc). The organisation will give the same consideration to those complaints.

1.4 WECIL's complaints policy sets out to provide:

- A staged approach to resolving problems quickly;
- A procedure for investigating a complaint;
- A means of keeping the complainant informed about progress as well as about the eventual outcome;
- An appeals facility appropriate to the category of complaint;
- Advice to complainants on where they can obtain independent help and assistance, for example legal aid, Citizens Advice Bureau or other appropriate organisation;
- Access to the relevant local authority's complaints procedure where applicable;
- Systematic analysis at a corporate level to see why most complaints are arising;

- Reports on complaints that state what preventative action has been taken

2. General Principles

2.1 We will actively seek feedback on our services, whether positive or negative as part of our commitment to regular monitoring and evaluation and co-production.

2.2 Notices will be displayed in all our offices seeking service users' views, and we will develop a range of other processes to regularly seek their views and to facilitate co-production.

2.3 We understand that from time to time, a complaint may arise about some aspect of the organisation, or an individual volunteer, Trustee or member of staff, and we will use these as learning opportunities.

2.4 It is WECIL's policy to take an inclusive approach to complaints and to accept written and verbal complaints, video or audio recorded complaints and complaints in British Sign Language, and also to assist those who wish to put their complaint into writing but who may have difficulty doing so. Complaints in other accessible formats that people prefer will also be accepted (e.g. Braille, Easy Read).

2.5 Complaints can be brought by individuals and/or by their advocate or representative. People giving support may participate at every/or any stage of the process.

2.6 It is not WECIL's policy to investigate anonymous complaints, except where they indicate the possibility of danger to the health and safety of a members of WECIL's community, member of staff, or other individual or the safety of a project.

2.7 We will seek to resolve any problems informally as soon as they occur. However, all formal complaints will be taken seriously, and we will follow the procedures below, meeting the required timescales.

2.8 We will learn from any individual complaints and their outcomes, and from any positive feedback. We will identify and consider any trends shown

in the Complaints Annual Report and will put in place actions to address them.

3. Scope of Policy

3.1 This policy and procedure applies to all informal and formal complaints and positive feedback that are raised with WECIL, either verbally or in writing, or in another accessible format by people who use our services, partners, or other external bodies or individuals and members of the public.

3.2 If a staff member or volunteer has a complaint or positive feedback, they should raise it with their line manager, or if necessary, through the Grievance Procedure.

3.3 If a trustee has a complaint about WECIL, they should raise it with the CEO or the Chair of the Trustees.

3.4 Staff, volunteers and trustees should also be aware of the WECIL's Whistleblowing Policy and use that process where appropriate.

3.5 Any concerns or complaints relating to safeguarding should be referred to the Designating Safeguarding Leads who will follow this Policy if appropriate but will always also follow all aspects of the *Safeguarding Children and Adults Policies*. Should there ever be a conflict of process, the safeguarding policies shall always be followed.

4. Definitions

4.1 Positive feedback is a compliment, or any comment made formally that relates to a service that WECIL provides or to a staff member, volunteer or trustee. This might include emails, letters, or cards.

4.2 Concerns are issues that are raised informally with a staff member, and the person raising them is happy with the response and does not wish to complain.

4.3 A complaint is defined as *a formal expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by WECIL or its*

staff which affects an individual, a group of service users or an organisation. Unresolved concerns can become complains if the complainant wishes.

4.4 A first request for a service, or the first request for assistance with a problem, is not a complaint within the scope of this Policy. However, any aspect of the way in which such requests or problems are subsequently dealt with, could be the subject of a complaint.

4.3. Complaints would usually be written (by email, letter etc.) and made formally, but they can be presented in any preferred accessible format. They will be considered to be a complaint if the complainant either states that they are making a complaint, or subsequently confirms that they would like the matter to be dealt with as a complaint when asked.

5. Roles And Responsibilities

5.1 All staff and Managers

5.1.1 All staff have a responsibility to seek the views of people who use WECIL's services in their day-to-day work.

5.1.2 All staff should record and respond to any positive feedback and concerns that are raised, and to pass them their line managers for information.

5.1.3 Any staff member receiving a complaint (see definition) should record it on the Complaints Form and pass it to their line manager. Any concerns or compliments that are passed to managers by staff should be recorded.

5.1.4 Any formal complaints received by line managers should be acted on by ensuring they are recorded on the Complaints Form and passed to their Head of Service. Complaints relating to areas of WECIL outside the service delivery areas should be handled by manager for that area (e.g. Head of Quality and Systems).

5.2 Heads of Services

5.2.1 General concerns can often be resolved by the staff member responsible for that aspect of the service or by their line manager.

5.1.2 The Heads of Services are responsible for dealing with all formal complaints in the first instance but may delegate to another member of staff where appropriate.

5.1.3 Heads of Service are responsible for logging all Complaints Forms on SharePoint and completing the Complaints Register on SharePoint, keeping it updated with actions and closing cases at the end of every process.

5.3 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

5.3.1 The CEO is responsible for ensuring this Policy is implemented and that all staff and managers are aware of their responsibilities.

5.3.2 The CEO will bring an Annual Report on Complaints and Positive Feedback to the Board of Trustees with information about how each one has been resolved and the timescales involved. This will also identify any trends and actions that have been taken to address them.

5.3.3 Requests for a reconsideration of a decision made by a Head of Service on a complaint, and complaints relating to the Heads of Service themselves, will be dealt with by the CEO. Complaints against the CEO will be dealt with by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

5.4 Board of Trustees

5.4.1 Appeals against a decision on a complaint made by the Chair of the Trustees (i.e. a complaint in relation to the CEO) will be dealt with by a Committee of not less than 3 members of the Board of Trustees who have not previously been involved with the complaint.

5.4.2 Complaints against the Chair of the Board of Trustees should also be considered by a similar Committee.

6. Relevant Policies

6.1 This Policy complements, and should be considered along with other WECIL Policies:

- *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*
- *Grievance Policy*
- *Disciplinary Policy*
- *Whistleblowing Policy*
- *Safeguarding Adults Policy*
- *Safeguarding Children Policy*
- *Confidentiality Policy*
- *Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy*
- *Rewards and Recognition Policy (to be finalised)*

7. The Procedures

7.1 Positive Feedback

Positive feedback will routinely be shared between staff and volunteers. A copy of all positive feedback will be retained on SharePoint in the Positive Feedback file by managers. Positive feedback will be included in the Annual Complaints and Positive Feedback Report to Trustees.

7.2 Negative Feedback - Receiving A Concern or Complaint

WECIL aims to make the Complaints Process accessible to everyone. At any stage of the Complaints Procedure, the complainant may request someone to accompany them (a friend or colleague) or an advocate. Where the process requires communication in writing, if anyone involved in the process has access issues relating to writing, any other for accessible form of communication is acceptable.

7.3 Service Standards:

- All written complaints will be acknowledged in writing within five working days, with information concerning how the complaint will be handled, and the date by which they will receive a response.
- WECIL will aim to resolve complaints within fifteen working days with a written response confirming action taken.
- If the complaint is complex, it may take longer to resolve. In such cases, the complainant will receive, at a minimum, monthly written progress reports.
- All staff are trained in dealing with complaints. In addition, where relevant, complaints will be discussed in team meetings and 1:1 supervision sessions so that employees can learn from them.

8. Complaints Process (A flowchart of the Complaints Process is included as Appendix 2)

8.1 STAGE 1: Concerns

8.1.1 Misunderstandings often arise through a simple breakdown in communication, and if we do not know of concerns, we can do nothing to resolve them.

8.1.2 Concerns raised with any member of staff should be recorded and passed to the relevant manager. A straightforward informal discussion between those involved may be all that is needed to set things right. This is likely to be dealt with by the relevant manager or other senior staff member if the manager is involved.

8.1.3 Concerns should be resolved in 2 working days.

8.1.4 If the situation is resolved to the satisfaction of the person raising the concern, the case will be closed. Any concerns related to a staff member should be raised at the next 1:1, to ensure they are resolved and that lessons are learnt from the situation.

8.2 STAGE 2: Formal complaints

8.2.1 If it is not possible to resolve the concern informally, and the complainant is not satisfied, concerns will be dealt with as a complaint and passed to the Head of the Service.

8.2.2 Formal complaints may be made verbally, in written or any other accessible format or using the attached Complaints Form (Appendix 1). Where necessary, the person wishing to make a complaint should receive support to record the complaint in a written form. All complaints will be passed to the Heads of Service in the first instance.

8.2.3 The Head of Service will record the complaint on the Complaints Register on SharePoint. They will acknowledge the complaint or the escalated concern, in writing within 5 working days. They will also explain how the complaint will be handled, if necessary seek further clarification from the complainant, and will give a likely timescale for the response to the complaint (usually 15 working days).

8.2.4 The Head of Service will then arrange an investigation into the complaint. They would usually do this themselves but may appoint an Investigating Officer (usually another Head of Service or Manager relevant to the service) if they are already involved in the situation, or feel this is more appropriate.

8.2.4 The investigation will include asking the complainant how they have been negatively treated and what they would like to happen to remedy this, and this will be recorded. This may also involve speaking to other parties involved and/or witnesses not involved, and recording the information received.

8.2.5 The investigation should normally be completed, and the complainant responded to, within 15 working days. If the situation is complex and may take longer to resolve, the investigator will let the complainant know the likely timescale to resolve the complaint and give a minimum of monthly updates.

8.2.6 Following the investigation, the Head of Service (or the investigation officer) will decide whether they uphold, partially uphold or reject the complaint. They will also recommend an appropriate course of action and communicate this to the complainant (and all other parties involved) verbally (using an interpreter where necessary) and then follow up in writing. This process should normally be completed within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.

8.3 STAGE 3: Appeal to CEO

8.3.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 2 response, or with the way the complaint has been dealt with, or if the complaint relates directly to a Head of Service, the complainant should write to the CEO to request consideration/reconsideration of the complaint. The letter should state the reasons for the complaint and what course of action would be acceptable. Any such request should be sent within 21 days of the Stage 2 response. This can be done in any accessible alternative to writing.

8.3.2 The CEO will consider all of the written evidence recorded by the Head of Service, and if necessary, may gather further evidence and/or call a meeting to interview the complainant, further witnesses and relevant staff. They will reply to the complainant within a further 10 working days setting out their decision as to whether they uphold, partially uphold or reject the appeal and the reasons for it. The CEO will recommend any action for WECIL or other parties as a result of the appeal.

8.4 STAGE 4 – Final Appeal

8.4.1 If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the result, following consideration of the complaint by the CEO, or if the complaint is against the CEO, it may be referred to the Chair of Trustees for a final appeal. If the complaint has been considered by the CEO or Chair in first instance, this final appeal will be to a Committee of at least 3

members of the Board of Trustees (not previously connected to the complaint) appointed by the Board of Trustees.

8.4.2 The complainant should write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees stating their reason for the appeal and what course of action would be acceptable. Any such request should be sent within 21 days of the Stage 3 response.

8.4.3 The appointed Committee of the Board of Trustees will consider all of the written evidence recorded previously and if necessary, may gather further evidence and/or call a meeting to interview the complainant, further witnesses and relevant staff. The Committee will reply to the complaint within 20 working days of receiving the appeal, setting out their decision to uphold, partially uphold or reject the appeal, and will give their reasons for it. They will recommend any actions for WECIL or other parties resulting from the decision.

8.4.4 The decision of the Committee will be final. If relevant, a complainant will be given information about other ways to complain e.g. OFSTED, Care Quality Commission or Local Authority.

9. Complaints Which Assert Discrimination or Harassment

9.1 Where the complainant asserts (explicitly or implicitly) that there has been discrimination or harassment, it will also be necessary to consider whether any actions should be taken in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and/or Grievance Policy. The procedures for formal investigation contained within those policies should be followed and the complaint should immediately be dealt with as a Stage 2 complaint as particular care will be needed.

10. Record Of Complaints

10.1 Managers must record all complaints on the Complaints Register on SharePoint. Records will be maintained by the Head of Quality and Systems and kept confidential. The record of complaints will include details of any follow up action.

11 Publicising the Policy

11.1 This policy and appendices will be publicised on the WECIL website, along with a link to an online complaints form. Printed copies of the policy and appendices will be kept at the WECIL office and can be requested in person, by phone or email.

11.2 All induction packs, whether in print or online, will contain the complaints information sheet for service users. Staff will go through the complaints procedure in service user inductions.

12 Monitoring the Policy and Procedures

12.1 This Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees.

12.2 The implementation of the Policy will be overseen by the CEO who will prepare an Annual Report on all Complaints and Positive Feedback to the Board of Trustees.

Approved by Trustees on: 27th February 2023

Date for Review: February 2026

Appendix 1 – Complaints Form

Date:

Name of complainant.....

Address:.....

.....

Contact – mobile:

Contact- Email:.....

Complaint:

Date of incident	Description of incident/complaint/feedback	Action member/volunteer would like to see

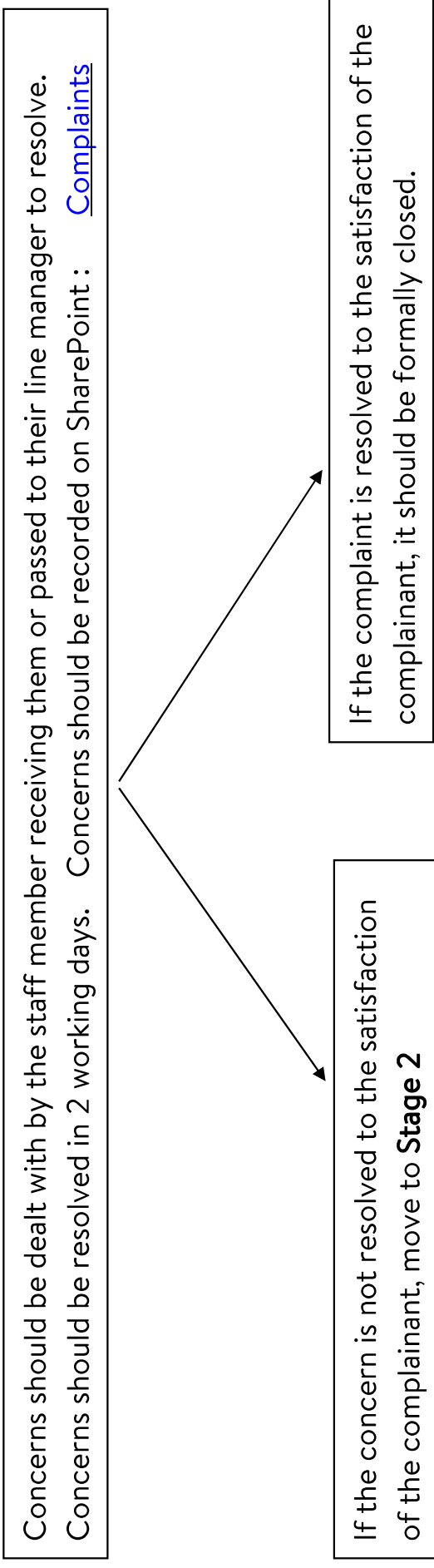
Response

Date	Action Taken	By Whom

Appendix 2 : Flowchart Summary of Complaints Process

Definition of Complaint: A complaint is defined as a ‘formal expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by WECIL or its staff which affects an individual, a group of service users or an organisation. Unresolved concerns can become complains if the complainant wishes’.

Stage 1: Concerns



Stage 2: Formal Complaints

When a complaint is received or a concern escalated:

- Ensure a Complaint Form is completed, providing support if complainant needs it ([Complaint Form Template Feb 2023.docx](#))
- Pass Complaint Form to Head of Service
- Head of Service records on Complaints Register ([Complaints Register.xlsx](#))
- Head of Service investigates or appoints investigating officer to investigate
- Response in 15 working days unless it is a complex situation, in which case let complainant know the likely timescale, and provide a minimum of monthly progress updates

If the complainant is not happy with the decision move to **Stage 3**

If the complaint is resolved, close the case on SharePoint.

Stage 3: Appeal to CEO

If the complainant is not happy with the Stage 2 decision or if the complaint is about the Head of Service pass to CEO.

- CEO completes Complaints Register on link ([Complaints Register .xlsx](#))
- CEO considers evidence and undertakes further interviews if necessary with complainant, interviewing officer, witnesses and staff
- CEO replies in 10 working days to say if appeal is upheld or rejected.
- CEO makes recommendations for WECIL or other parties

If the complainant asks to move to a Stage 4 Appeal or the complaint is against the CEO, move to Stage 4.

If the complainant does not appeal within 21 days, CEO closes the case.

Stage 4: Final Appeal

The Stage 4 appeal will be heard by 3 Trustees appointed by the Board, who have not previously been involved in the complaint.

- Committee considers written evidence
- Committee calls meeting to interview complainant, investigating officer, witnesses and relevant staff
- Committee replies in 20 working days to say if appeal is upheld, partially upheld or rejected
- Committee makes recommendations to WECIL and other parties

The Committee's decision is final.
The decision is recorded and the case is closed.

Appendix 3: Where Else to Go for Help and Support

NB: This is a list in development:

- Safeguarding Policy for [Children](#) and [Adults](#)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead Adults : Lucie Martin-Jones
Lucie.Martin-Jones@wecil.org.uk
- Designated Safeguarding Lead Children and Young People: Matt Justice
Matt.Justice@wecil.org.uk