

Care & Repair Cardiff and the Vale

Concerns and Complaints Policy

Responsibility for Review	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
Chief Officer	March 2019	March 2021

1. Introduction

Care & Repair Cardiff and the Vale views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- to provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- to publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- to make sure everyone in the Agency knows what to do if a complaint is received
- to make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- to make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- to gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Care & Repair Cardiff and the Vale is committed to ensuring that people will find it easy to complain and get things put right when the service they receive is not good enough.

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Care & Repair Cardiff and the Vale and the services it provides.

A complaint is:

- an expression of dissatisfaction or concern
- either written or spoken or made by any other communication method
- made by one or more members of the public
- about Care & Repair Cardiff and the Vale's action or lack of action
- or about the standard of service provided
- which requires a response

whether about the Agency itself, a person / contractor acting on its behalf, or a partner organisation.

3. Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from a wide range of sources including clients, their families or representatives, partner organisations, referrers, etc.

Any complaints made on behalf of clients must have their agreement for the representative to act on their behalf.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use the Agency's Discipline and Grievance policies as outlined in the staff handbook.

4. Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following all relevant data protection requirements.

5. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the trustees of Care & Repair Cardiff and the Vale.

On a day to day basis, the Chief Officer, Operational Manager and staff of the Agency will be responsible for the investigation and resolution of any concerns or complaints received.

6. Complaints Procedure

6.1 Publicised Contact Details for Complaints

Written complaints may be sent to the Agency at Tolven Court, Dowlais Road, Cardiff, CF24 5LQ or by e-mail at careandrepair@crcv.org.uk.

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 02920 473337 or in person to any of Agency's staff or trustees.

Ideally people should complete the Agency's client concern and complaint form. However, people may prefer to present their complaint by telephone, e-mail, or in person (or other method). In doing so staff dealing with the complaint should ensure that they have gathered the same information as that being sought on the complaint form and ensure it is recorded appropriately.

6.2 Resolving Complaints

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

This stage offers the opportunity for informal engagement at the point of service delivery to seek to resolve complaints either at the time the concern arises or very shortly thereafter. This stage should be part and parcel of front line service delivery and not viewed as separate from it. All staff of the Agency are expected to be able to resolve relevant informal complaints

The informal resolution stage should be done as quickly as possible and certainly take no longer than 10 working days.

Examples of the type of concern that can be resolved at the informal resolution stage are:

- Dissatisfaction with a contractor's work or service delivery
- Failure of Agency staff or a contractor to turn up to an appointment

Resolution will normally be an explanation or other appropriate remedial action by staff.

Stage 2 - Formal Internal Investigation

'Investigate once, investigate well' is the principle for this stage of the process. Emphasis is placed on one investigation to deal thoroughly with the concerns raised. 'Investigating well' also means conducting an investigation in a manner that is proportionate to the nature and degree of seriousness of the complaint. Proportionate means that for those complaints not so serious in their nature, the investigation may not need to be so detailed.

Complaints will initially be investigated by the Operational Manager or Chief Officer (depending on the nature of the complaint) with assistance from relevant staff e.g. Technical Officer, Caseworker, etc.

Having formally received a complaint at Stage 2, an acknowledgement should be sent by the Operational Manager or Chief Officer (or in their absence the Senior Administrator) as soon as is possible, but within a maximum of 5 working days.

The Operational Manager or Chief Officer should record the details of the complaint on the Agency's complaints database.

If the complaint relates to a specific person or contractor, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 10 working days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage 3 - Review of Investigation by the Trustees

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 2 they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the trustees of Care & Repair Cardiff and the Vale.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the trustees.

The request for trustees' level review should be acknowledged within 5 working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair of the trustees will review the investigation and any action taken by the Agency as a result of the complaint and will determine whether the process followed and the Agency's response has been fair and appropriate.

The decision taken at this stage is final.

Stage 4 - External Review

Even in cases where an investigation upholds the complaint and offers remedy / redress, it may be that the complainant remains dissatisfied for some reason. Therefore, in all cases, the complainant should be informed that if they remain dissatisfied then they have the right to seek an independent external consideration of their complaint.

The complainant should be advised that they can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx.

7. What the Agency expects from Complainants or their Representatives

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a concern or a complaint. The Agency does not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

The Agency believes that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, the Agency also considers that our staff have the same rights. The Agency, therefore, expects complainants or their representatives to be polite and courteous in their dealings with us.

The Agency will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence. The Agency has a separate policy to manage situations where we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.