

PCVS Complaints Policy and Procedure

Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service (PCVS) endeavours to provide our members, communities and other service users with a good service and appropriate support. We recognise that sometimes people may feel that we did not meet their requirements fully or that we could improve how we provide our services. It is important to us that we are made aware of any concerns or complaints at an early stage in order that we can resolve your issue and take on all areas of feedback and learning, to improve how we operate in the future.

1. AIMS

These procedures are designed to help and encourage the achievement and maintenance of standards of conduct and services provided by PCVS.

PCVS expects all paid workers and volunteers to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and not in any way that will bring discredit to themselves, their position, other volunteers, service users, PCVS employees or PCVS itself.

These procedures are designed to clarify, as far as possible, the responsibilities of paid workers and volunteers, including Board of Trustees members, in respect of complaints.

The Policy will ensure confidentiality, consistency and fair treatment for those using the procedure and will align with all other PCVS policies.

2. PRINCIPLES

PCVS welcomes feedback and wherever possible, will treat complaints as a constructive way to learn and improve performance.

PCVS aims to resolve informal complaints as soon as possible with the person concerned, preferably within 7 working days or if not possible within 28 days. It is aimed that the majority of complaints are dealt with and resolved in an informal way.

In the event of complaints not being resolved informally, formal procedures exist to provide a conclusion.

PCVS aims to resolve formal complaints as soon as possible with the person concerned, preferably within 7 working days but always within 28 days.

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing, under the Complaints Procedure. These can be made over email or by post to the PCVS official offices and should be made on the attached Complaints Form.

The Complainant will be kept informed at all stages as to the progress of the complaint and the course of action being taken.

Written records of **all** steps in the Complaints Procedure will be kept by PCVS and will be made available as appropriate.

Where appropriate, the Chair and/or a Vice Chair of PCVS Board of Trustees may be involved in the complaints procedures as outlined in the procedures below.

Every complaint raised with PCVS will be investigated. For a complaint to be dealt with fairly and effectively, sufficient information must be provided. If all information is not provided on the Complaints Form, further details may be requested to ensure any investigation is fair and fully informed.

An Appeals Panel of the Board of Trustees will be formed as necessary to consider complaints that cannot be resolved at Stages 3 -4 in the Complaints Procedure.

In order that there is no bias with regard to appeal there shall be a minimum of three Trustees who will have no involvement in the Complaints Procedure until the Appeal Stage.

3. PROCEDURES

Responding to complaints:

- All complaints will be acknowledged within seven days
- All complaints will be treated as confidential.
- The procedure for responding to complaints has up to three stages outlined below:

Stage One:

PCVS Workers, in liaison with their line managers, and other colleagues if appropriate, should attempt to respond to the complaint informally if appropriate. This would be appropriate for complaints where it has been made clear that only an acknowledgement or apology is required, or where a change to service provision can be made that satisfies

the person complaining. If there is any doubt, the worker involved should follow up the response to the complaint to check whether the person complaining is satisfied with the outcome.

Stage Two:

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally by Stage One, the person complaining will be informed that the complaint will be investigated. They should be informed about any local support service available to them if this is appropriate. The Managers of any service involved in the complaint must be informed as soon as possible. The Service Manager, or in their absence the CEO, will talk to the person complaining and any/all workers involved and write a short report outlining the circumstances and possible courses of action, including any actions suggested by the person complaining. The Managers will write to the complainant or invite them to a meeting and suggest an appropriate course of action based on the information received.

Contact and meetings with children and young people under the age of 18 should be conducted in an age- appropriate manner, encouraging the young person to involve parents, an advocate and/or a friend in meetings and conversations. They should be given a choice of venues and told who will be involved in the process and what its outcomes may be.

Stage Three:

If the complainant is not happy with the response from Stage Two, their complaint and its investigation will be discussed by a subgroup of PCVS Trustees. The person complaining should be informed of the date of this discussion and when they will be informed of its outcome. The Trustees will then write to them outlining their conclusions and actions to be taken.

The response from the Trustees should include the contact details of any independent bodies to which the person has recourse (such as the Local Authority or other statutory funder). Information will only be shared with external bodies at the complainant's request or in accordance with our Safeguarding and Data Protection/GDPR Policies.

Stage Four:

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of any Stage 3 investigation, then they are able to appeal the decision taken. Any appeal should be submitted in writing as a response to the Trustees Subgroup communication about the outcome and decision taken to resolve the complaint. This Appeal should be made within 7 working days of a decision being received by the complainant.

An Appeals Panel will be formed consisting of three Trustees who have not been involved in the original subgroup who investigated the complaint at Stage 3. They will then speak directly with the complainant and assess the details of the appeal made. The Appeals Panel will consider all aspects of the original complaint, and the appeal made and will make a decision that is unbiased, appropriate and is in line with all corresponding PCVS's Policies.

The Appeals Panel will write directly to the complainant informing them of the outcome of their appeal within 7 working days of meeting.

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Appeals Panel they will be provided with information of how they can make a complaint externally, either through our partners/stakeholders that may be involved in the service that the complaint refers to or to the most appropriate legislative monitoring bodies.

4. FURTHER INFORMATION:

If a person makes a complaint which is found not to be justified, they will not be penalised and may continue to have full access to our services. Those repeatedly making unjustified malicious complaints may have services withdrawn if this is felt necessary to protect their well-being, the safety of staff or the well-being of other stakeholders. This action should only be taken after discussion with Service Managers, CEO and Chair of Trustees (acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees), and a letter explaining the reasons for this action should be sent to the complainant.

Where complaints are deemed to have been made maliciously, further complaints will not be acted on immediately but first will be examined by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If the complaint appears to be different in character from previous (malicious) complaints, it will be investigated as laid down in this policy.

5. RECORDING AND MONITORING:

All complaints and their responses will be recorded and records kept whilst internal or external investigations are ongoing. Records containing personal information should be destroyed within three months of investigations being resolved, but a version with identifying details removed should be made available to the Board of Trustees. If documents are shared by PCVS, copies will be retained whilst any external investigation is ongoing.

Complaints and comments will be monitored and reported to the Board of Trustees at every meeting via the CEO/Chair reports.

PCVS Complaints Details Form

Please complete this form if you wish to make a formal complaint to PCVS.

This form accompanies and relates to PCVS Complaints Policy and Procedure document.

All information contained within this form will be treated confidentially and all written complaints will be logged as per our process outlined in the policy.

We will investigate this complaint in line with our Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Please complete these details:

Name of complainant: _____

Date: _____

Name of complainant's group or organisation (if applicable) _____

Date or dates when issue occurred _____

Please outline your complaint giving as much detail as possible about what happened, who was involved and what has caused you to be dissatisfied. Please continue on another sheet if necessary.

What action would you like to see being taken to resolve this issue?

Please sign below to acknowledge receipt of the policy, to confirm that you wish to submit a formal complaint and that you have provided all known details on this form.

Signed.....

Print name.....

Date.....

Please either email this completed form to pcvs@pcvs.co.uk or post to PCVS, Allia Future Business Centre, London Rd, Peterborough PE2 8AN