

NORFOLK RIVERS TRUST

COMPLIMENT AND COMPLAINT POLICY

1. Introduction

Norfolk Rivers Trust is committed to providing an excellent service to its service users. We work in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect and invites feedback, both positive and negative, in order that we may learn and encourage best practice.

This Compliment and Complaint policy applies to all areas of Norfolk Rivers Trust activity and to all members of staff (see definition below). We are always pleased to receive positive feedback about our services and the work of individual members of staff who go the extra mile and we aim to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively.

We consider that one of the key ways we can improve our services is to listen to the views, both positive and negative, of our service users and members of staff.

Managers, indeed all members of staff, are encouraged to consider both compliments and complaints as opportunities to learn; compliments to extend good practice and complaints to mitigate risk and improve performance. It is our intention to thoroughly investigate any complaints that we receive, learn from the findings, respond openly and honestly and implement change to ensure that any mistakes are rectified, and the chance of a repeat occurrence is diminished.

2. Definitions

In this policy, the following words and phrases have the following meanings:

Compliment - an expression of satisfaction with a service made about an individual member of staff, a service, a team or the charity as a whole.

Complaint - an expression of dissatisfaction with a service, whether justified or not, made about an individual member of staff, a service, a team or the charity as a whole, that requires a response.

Service user - includes any member organisation, client or other customer of the charity's activities, partnership projects or divisions and all visitors to Norfolk Rivers Trust premises.

Member of staff - includes any trustee, director, employee, worker, agency worker, apprentice, intern, volunteer, contractor or consultant employed or engaged by Norfolk Rivers Trust.

3. Objectives of Policy

We aim to:

- Provide a framework that is simple to use and accessible to anyone wishing to leave a compliment or make a complaint,
- Generate a positive attitude to feedback and give service users confidence that their compliments and complaints are listened to and make a difference,
- Ensure that all complaints are handled promptly, politely and honestly; protecting the

privacy of the complainant where necessary, appropriate or requested,

- Ensure complaints are handled fairly, consistently and, wherever possible, are resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.
- Apologise when something has gone wrong, in writing if this is appropriate, and take action to prevent recurrence of the problem,
- Learn from and share feedback and use it to improve the services we offer,
- Record and analyse the positive and negative feedback we receive and review our Compliments and Complaints policy annually.

4. Feedback Framework

Norfolk Rivers Trust recognises that many compliments and complaints will be informal. However, we aim to capture information from as many of these as possible and provide a Compliments, Complaints and Feedback form for this purpose. Normally completed forms will be sent direct to the Quality & Governance Manager but any member of staff being given a completed form should accept the form and explain that it will be forwarded to the Quality & Governance Manager for their consideration.

All members of staff should notify their line manager or volunteer coordinator, of any compliment or complaint they receive, even those complaints that are apparently satisfactorily responded to at the time, confirming the nature of the feedback and any action taken.

For all formal complaints, or those not able to be resolved at the time, Norfolk Rivers Trust follows a three stage complaints procedure:

Stage 1 – receipt of complaint, investigation by line manager / volunteer coordinator and response.

Stage 2 – confirmation that complainant not happy with local response prompting further investigation by more senior manager.

Stage 3 – appeal of outcome of stage 2 investigation.

More detail can be found in the Compliments and Complaints Procedure.

Compliment and complaint information will be analysed by the Quality & Governance Manager, who will provide an Annual Feedback Report to the Chief Executive, for onward transmission to the Board.

Complaints received anonymously and complaints received more than 6 months after the event has occurred must be forwarded direct to the Quality & Governance Manager and will only be investigated at his/her discretion.

For clarity:

- The complaints procedure will be suspended if a complainant is actively seeking legal redress.
- For complaints that may have safety implications, Heads of Service, may undertake or

support team leaders / volunteer coordinators in the Stage 1 investigation.

- The Quality & Governance Manager may, at any stage of a formal complaint procedure, review a complaint and give a decision, without a formal investigation, where they agree with a member of the Senior Management Team that the complaint should be considered deliberately repetitive or vexatious.

5. **Complaints against members of staff**

When a written complaint is received against a member of staff, they will receive an anonymised copy of the complaint and will be informed of the support services available to them.

If at any time during the investigation of a complaint matters arise that warrant investigation under disciplinary proceedings, or a criminal investigation, the complaints procedure will be suspended until those investigations are concluded and the complainant will be informed of the reasons for the delay

If a complaint involves a member of the SMT, then the complaints procedure will be handled by the Chief Executive and a Trustee will handle any final appeal stage.

If a complaint involves the Chief Executive, then the complaints procedure will be handled by a Trustee and the Chair or Vice-chair of the Trustee Board, will handle any final appeal stage.

6. **Key Responsibilities**

All members of staff must be aware of the requirements of this Compliments and Complaints Policy and follow the Compliments & Complaints Procedure when necessary.

Norfolk Rivers Trust will review compliment and complaint information on an at least annual basis to identify patterns, ensure learning and mitigate risk.

7. **Cross Reference to other policies and documentation**

- Governance Framework
- Data Protection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Compliments and Complaints Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure

8. **Key contacts & responsibilities**

The Trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring implementation and adherence to this policy. On a day to day basis this responsibility is delegated to the CEO.

The CEO is authorised to use his/her discretion in the operation and implementation of this policy; subject to reporting any substantive changes to the Board of Trustees and/or the relevant Sub-



committee as appropriate.

The Quality & Governance Manager is Marie-Anne Edwards and can be contacted as follows:

Email: info@norfolkriverstrust.org

Telephone: 01263 711299

Post: 7b Bayfield Brecks, Bayfield, Holt, Norfolk, NR25 7DZ

9. **Data Protection**

In the implementation of this policy, Norfolk Rivers Trust may process personal data and/or special category personal data collected in accordance with our Data Protection policy. Data collected from the point at which this policy is invoked will only inform the charity for the benefit of implementing this policy. All data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of this policy.

Inappropriate access or disclosure of personal data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's GDPR and data protection policy immediately. For current employees this conduct may amount to a gross misconduct offence under Norfolk Rivers Trust's disciplinary procedure and could lead to summary dismissal; if you have a different relationship with Norfolk Rivers Trust following investigation this may be terminated and even if your involvement with Norfolk Rivers Trust is no longer current we may consider taking legal action.