

## Nene Valley Christian Family Refuge

### Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

This is the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy of Nene Valley Christian Refuge, known as **eve**.

1.1 NVCFR strives for high standards in everything that it does and welcomes feedback from individuals, clients, partners, volunteers, staff and anyone who works with us, on all aspects of our work. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our work.

1.2 The objectives of the Compliments and Complaints Policy are to:

- Ensure everyone knows how to provide feedback and how a complaint will be handled
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear and acceptable timeframes
- Ensure that compliments and complaints are monitored and used to improve our services.

1.3 We will ensure that we:

- Listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential, where possible
- Record, process, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated timeframe
- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal
- Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented as a result of the complaint, where appropriate
- Report, on a quarterly basis, the number of compliments and complaints received; the outcomes of investigations and any actions taken.

## 2. Definition of a Complaint

2.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, whether justified or not. An individual may make a complaint if they feel we have:

- Failed to provide a service or an acceptable standard of service
- Delayed in providing a service
- Made a mistake in the way we have provided a service
- Failed to act in a proper way
- Provided an unfair service.

2.1.1 This policy and procedure relates only to complaints received about NVCFR and its services. Individuals who make complaints about partner organisations will be notified in writing within one working day of receipt of the complaint that they need to complain to the organisation they have the complaint with, and will be provided with contact details, where possible.

### 3. Compliments and Complaints Procedure

#### 3.1 Compliments

Any verbal or written compliments will be recorded by the member of staff receiving the compliment and be passed to their line manager for recording on the Compliments Register. Any member of staff identified as being the subject or contributing to any matter giving rise to the compliment will be notified within three working days. Feedback on compliments will be shared with employees at appropriate timings.

#### 3.2 Complaints

There are 3 stages to the complaints procedure:

- Stage One – Complaint
- Stage Two – Appeal
- Stage Three – Independent Review

NVCFR is a member of Restorative Solutions CIC and we aim to embed Restorative Practices in the delivery of our day to day business. We use restorative practices to support staff, volunteers and service users in finding solutions for minor conflict and resolving complaints to the satisfaction of all concerned.

There is growing evidence for using restorative practices to prevent conflict or harm in the first place, to deal with minor conflict proactively. Restorative practice techniques include formal meetings between the person making the complaint and a representative of our organization. The agreed model – Restorative Northamptonshire – provides a direct service where we can refer more complex cases. This approach enables restorative activities to be used both proactively to build and sustain positive relationships, and reactively where conflict or harm has already occurred.

Restorative practices help people think of others, the impact their actions can have on others and encourages mutual respect and honesty. We believe that using these techniques in our organisation can only have a beneficial impact in other areas of people's lives.

Before making a complaint we will encourage the complainant to talk to a member of staff about their concerns. If they are not happy with their response or assistance the complainant should be asked to follow the complaints procedure—this consists of the three stages shown below. If the complainant is not receiving a service from our organisation, but wishes to make a complaint they should put their complaint in writing and address it to the CEO.

#### **Stage one**

3.3 We aim to settle issues quickly and satisfactorily by the member of staff or the relevant manager who provides the service. It may be resolved quickly by way of an apology, by providing the service required or by providing an acceptable explanation to the individual. A Restorative Practice meeting may be offered to the complainant if this is appropriate in the circumstances.

3.4 Individuals wishing to make a formal complaint should contact the person who provided the service, or their manager. Alternatively they can contact NVCFR by emailing [admin@eveda.org.uk](mailto:admin@eveda.org.uk) or writing to:

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NVCFR, PO Box 76, NN1 5RL. The complainant may require support to put their complaint into writing or to follow the complaint procedure, they may ask a member of staff, who is not involved in the complaint, to support them.

3.5 Verbal complaints will not be accepted as a formal complaint and will not be dealt with under this policy and procedure.

3.6 On receipt of a written complaint, each complaint will be allocated a unique reference number and logged on the Complaints Register by the Administrator. The complaint will be emailed immediately to the Complaints Investigator – this is the member of staff or the manager responsible for the service being complained about.

3.7 Complaints will be acknowledged within three working days of receipt. The complaints will be fully investigated and a written response, either hard copy or email, provided to the complainant by the investigator within 20 working days of receipt. In exceptional circumstances where this deadline is not able to be met, the complainant will be advised of the reasons for this and notified of a revised date for response.

3.8 The Complaints Register will be updated by Admin and any pending complaints flagged so they are followed up by the relevant manager.

3.9 Individuals will be advised that if they are not satisfied with the response to their complaint, they may appeal to the CEO within 14 working days and progress to Stage Two.

### **Stage Two**

3.10 The Chief Executive Officer will investigate the matter personally. The CEO will contact the complainant to clarify the issues, conduct the investigation and explore resolution. The complainant will receive written confirmation of the outcome of any investigation within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal together with any recommendations/remedies made, such as, staff development and training, reviewing of policies or appropriate improvement to our services. The outcome will not refer to any individual employees or groups of employees.

3.11 Occasionally, investigations may take longer, particularly if the complaint is complex. Should this be the case a holding letter will be sent after 20 working days and a final date given for a conclusion to be reached.

3.12 If an individual remains dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage Two they can request an Independent Review within 14 working days of the date of the outcome letter and progress to Stage Three.

### **Stage Three**

3.13 The Board of Trustees will review the Stage Two investigation and recommend one of the following actions, within 20 working days:

- Uphold the action taken at Stage Two

- Implement changes to the Stage Two recommendations/actions.

#### **4. Anonymous Compliments and Complaints**

4.1. Compliments and complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

#### **5. Data Protection**

5.1 To process a complaint, we will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides and which other people give in response to investigating the complaint. We will hold this data securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and only use it to help address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

5.2 Under the Data Protection Act 1998, individuals have a right to obtain a copy of their personal data. However, there are exceptions to this right. We will normally destroy compliments and complaints files in a secure manner six years after the compliment has been made or the complaint closed.

#### **6. Monitoring**

6.1 Compliments and complaints are an important tool which, alongside data provided by exit surveys, user feedback and focus groups, will allow us to learn more about the services we provide. They offer a useful source of information about how individuals see our charity and how we are serving them. To ensure we can learn from compliments and complaints, the following data will be collected:

Compliments:

- Name and address
- Nature of the compliment
- Date of compliment
- Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the compliment, if appropriate.

Complaints:

- Name and address
- Name of person dealing with the complaint
- Date of complaint and response date
- Nature of complaint
- Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the complaint
- Lessons learnt.

6.2 Compliments and complaints information will be considered on a quarterly basis by the Senior Management Team and the Board of Trustees. Wherever possible the data will be used to improve and develop the service.

## **Nene Valley Christian Family Refuge**

### **Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure**

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NVCFR is a member of Restorative Solutions CIC and we aim to embed Restorative Practices in the delivery of our day to day business. We use restorative practices to support staff, volunteers and service users in finding solutions for minor conflict and resolving complaints to the satisfaction of all concerned.

There is growing evidence for using restorative practices to prevent conflict or harm in the first place, to deal with minor conflict proactively. Restorative practice techniques include formal meetings between the person making the complaint and a representative of our organization. The agreed model – Restorative Northamptonshire – provides a direct service where we can refer more complex cases. This approach enables restorative activities to be used both proactively to build and sustain positive relationships, and reactively where conflict or harm has already occurred.

Restorative practices help people think of others, the impact their actions can have on others and encourages mutual respect and honesty. We believe that using these techniques in our organisation can only have a beneficial impact in other areas of people's lives.

#### **Why do we want to hear from you?**

NVCFR aims to provide a high quality service and therefore we need to know whether you are satisfied or not — how can we put things right if we are not aware of the problem?

All complaints should be put in writing — that way we can be clear about what the problem is. We also need to know what you think would put it right — there is no guarantee that what you want to happen *will* happen but it helps to know your preference.

If you need someone to help you to make a complaint please ask a member of staff.

#### **What do we mean by a complaint?**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, whether justified or not. An individual may make a complaint if they feel we have:

- You are not satisfied with our standard of service.
- You believe we have failed to do something we should have done or acted inappropriately.
- You believe you have been treated unfairly or impolitely by staff or volunteers
- You believe a staff member, volunteer or another service user has acted in an anti-social or abusive manner.
- You believe that we have delayed in providing a service
- You believe that we have made a mistake in the way we have provided a service

#### **What we don't treat as a complaint**

- A request for information or an explanation of our policy or practice.

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- An initial request for service, for example a repair/maintenance etc.
- Day to day issues you may raise with staff but which you do not wish to be addressed by the formal Complaints Procedure.
- Factors that are outside our control.

### **How the complaints procedure works**

Before making a complaint we would encourage you to talk to a member of staff about your concerns. If you are not happy with their response or assistance then please follow the complaints procedure—this consists of the five stages shown below. If you are not receiving a service from our organisation yourself, but wish to make a complaint you should go straight to Stage 3.

If it is appropriate, you may be offered a Restorative Practice meeting. You will be listened to with respect and we will honestly review your complaint to be able to bring about an agreed resolution.

#### **Stage 1**

- Put your complaint in writing stating clearly what your complaint is and what you think can be done to put things right. This should be passed to your keyworker; if your complaint is about your keyworker then pass it to the Programme Operations Manager. If your complaint is about a Manager then please go straight to Stage 2.
- If either your keyworker or the Programme Operations Manager is handling your complaint they will do their best to resolve the matter as quickly as possible—this may involve speaking with other members of staff or service users; in any event they will acknowledge, in writing, receipt of your complaint within 2 working days.
- The complaint will be fully investigated and a written response, either hard copy or email, will be sent to you within 20 working days of receipt. In exceptional circumstances where this deadline is not able to be met, you will be advised of the reasons for this and notified of a revised date for response.
- If you are not happy with the outcome then move on to Stage 2.

#### **Stage 2**

- You should write to the Chief Executive Officer within 14 days of receipt of your outcome letter. The CEO will further investigate the matter personally. The CEO will contact you to clarify the issues, conduct the investigation and explore resolution. You will receive written confirmation of the outcome of any investigation within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal together with any recommendations/remedies made, such as, staff development and training, reviewing of policies or appropriate improvement to our services. The outcome will not refer to any individual employees or groups of employees.

**Stage 3**

- If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage Two you can request an Independent Review within 14 working days of the date of the outcome letter and progress to Stage Three.
- The Board of Trustees will review the Stage Two investigation and recommend one of the following actions, within 20 working days:

Uphold the action taken at Stage Two

Implement changes to the Stage Two recommendations/actions.

- ☒ If you are still not satisfied with the response, we suggest you contact one of the appropriate organisations listed below.

**Adults and Children's Commissioning**

Northamptonshire County Council  
Room 129, County Hall  
Guildhall Road  
Northampton  
NN1 1AY

If your complaint relates to any aspect of childcare you may write to Ofsted at:

**Office for Standards in Education**

The National Business Unit  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

If your complaint relates to the property you are/have been living in please contact your Housing Association:

**For Valley House**

East Midlands Housing Association  
Jubilee House  
Stenson Road  
Whitwick Business Park  
Coalville  
Leicestershire LE67 4NA

