



Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy and Procedure

Approved by	Executive Leadership Team
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For use by	All Norwood Services
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Policy Author	Assistant Director of Compliance
Policy Owner	Quality and Compliance Team
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Version History

Version	Date issued	Approved by	Summary of change	Made by
1.0	November 2021	Executive Leadership Team	<p>Full review:</p> <p>Changes to stages to simplify process.</p> <p>Change of Policy title from <i>Something to Say Policy and Procedures: Comments, Complaints and Compliments to Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy and Procedure.</i></p> <p>Change in response timescales to reflect LGSO best practice.</p> <p>Correction to appeals contact addresses.</p> <p>Inclusion of need to meet accessible information standards and provide the policy in alternative formats.</p> <p>Added complaints report template and letter templates.</p> <p>This policy supersedes <i>Something to Say: Comments, Complaints and Compliments</i> June 2019- 0SO26</p>	Assistant Director of Compliance

1.0 Purpose

- To improve the quality of the People we Support's experience and ensure that their voice is heard.
- To ensure that all complaints and suggestions are promptly addressed, resolved, and shared within the agreed timescales to ensure that lessons are learned and that the learning improves service quality and delivery.
- To ensure that Norwood complies with any legal requirements, regulations, guidelines, and best practice.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to Norwood Adult Services, Children and Families, Corporate services, and all other Norwood functions.

3.0 Policy Statement

We aim to provide a consistently high standard of service to everyone who uses or is impacted by our services, and we care about getting it right, ideally first time.

We recognise the importance of putting things right once we know something hasn't happened as it should. Our aim is always to maintain good working relationships with all people we support, their families, and other stakeholders. Norwood is committed to ensuring views about our services are valued and we actively encourage feedback. Complaints, compliments, and suggestions give us the opportunity to continually improve our service.

We foster an open culture which welcomes customer feedback. Listening and responding effectively is very important to us. We will not treat complainants differently because they have made a complain, they will be treated with courtesy, respect, and compassion. We recognise a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents, or tenant's' donors, volunteers or in the case of our children and families' services, any child, or their family. Norwood is open to all forms of feedback and will look to consider all interactions that may help us to improve. These may include face to face, in writing (both letter and email), telephone and via social media.

Norwood will ensure that our complaints and compliments procedure is fair and transparent and does not discriminate directly or indirectly because of the following:

- Age
- Being or becoming a transsexual/transgender person
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave
- Disability

- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief, or lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We will ensure that the process of how to make a complaint and the feedback is provided in a way to make it easy to raise a complaint or give feedback and is in a format that the complainant can understand.

Complaints or concerns by staff will be addressed via the grievance process if the complaint or concerns relates to them individually or the Whistleblowing procedure where a protected disclosure is made. Where concerns are raised that a Person we Support is at risk of harm or has been harmed we will follow our Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and where required, will contact the Police without delay and will seek guidance from our Local Authority Safeguarding Team. We will notify the Care Quality Commission in line with our statutory duty.

Norwood understands our statutory obligations in respect of the Duty of Candour and will ensure we follow the agreed policy and procedure.

4.0 Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring the complaints policy is in place, reflects best practice and is adhered to including reporting of themes and trends and reporting to the Charity Commission. Any complaints received directly by individual board members or Norwood members will be managed via the complaints procedure detailed in this policy's associated procedure.

Norwood Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership team at Norwood is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy, regulations, improvement planning and having arrangements in place to provide information in response to complaints within their department to the Customer Relations Manager. Any complaints submitted directly to any of the Executive Leadership Team including to the Chief Executive Officer, will be managed via the complaints procedure detailed in this policy's associated procedure. The team also are responsible for ensuring a positive culture using complaints and feedback to improve services for the people we support, ensuring learning from complaints is applied.

The Assistant Director of Compliance is accountable for the overall policy and is responsible for its implementation and for ensuring compliance and ensuring timely reporting on Complaints to the board.

Complaints about fund raising, donations, legacies or the Executive Leadership team will be managed by the Human Resources Director. Complaints about the CEO or Trustees will be

managed by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. Complaints about the Human resources director will be managed by the CEO.

Operational Management and Heads of Service

Heads of Service and Operations Managers are responsible for ensuring that complaints are escalated in line with the Norwood procedure, responded to within the defined timescales and documented. Additionally, they have responsibility for ensuring, where required that a complaints investigator is appointed with the appropriate level of seniority and understanding of how to conduct a robust and transparent investigation.

Registered Manager

The Registered Manager is accountable for ensuring that the People we Support, their families and those important to them, understand how to make a complaint about any aspect of our service. This information will be provided in a way that they can understand and where required they will be signposted to an independent advocate.

The Registered Manager will ensure that the complaint is escalated to the Customer Relations Manager as soon as they are made aware of the issue and that the complaint is acknowledged by the Registered Manager within 3 working days and a full response within 28 days is sent to the complainant and CQC. The Registered Manager is accountable for ensuring a record is made of all complaints made within the service and that this is held with the services complaints log and in the relevant individual's file.

All Staff

All staff have a responsibility to ensure they know to support someone to make a complaint about any aspect of Norwood's services. Where a member of staff has concerns that a person we support is at risk of harm or has been harmed, they must escalate their concerns immediately following the Norwood Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. Where a member of staff is concerned that their concerns are not being acted upon, they must raise a concern via Norwood's Whistleblowing Procedure without delay. If a Person We support is in immediate danger the member of staff must call 999.

This complaint policy will be visible within each service, on the website and will be provided to each person we support. We will ensure that the information is shared in a format that can be understood by the person who may wish to make a complaint. An easy read version sits along side this policy and is supported by an easy read complaints leaflet for each service.

5.0 One Complaint, One Response

Norwood will follow the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman guidance](#) for best practice where the Person we Support is receiving services from more than one organisation, we will ensure they can make a complaint to anyone and be provided with a single response following a joint investigation.

6.0 Procedure

Making a complaint

Anyone affected by the way Norwood provides services can make a complaint. The person making a complaint doesn't have to use the word complaint for it to be treated as a complaint. A complaint can be made, or a concern can be raised as follows:

- In Person
- Through a Team member, for example a support worker or manager
- Through an advocate or representative
- By telephone on the complaints phone number **07808 200 302**
- By letter
- By email to the manager
- By email to the complaints email address: complaints@norwood.org.uk
- By our website <https://www.norwood.org.uk/pages/about/talk-to-us/>

7.0 Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by:

- A Person we Support
- A Group of Tenants or Residents we Support
- Someone acting on behalf of a Person We Support and with their written consent, e.g., an advocate, relative, Member of Parliament
- Someone acting on behalf of a Person We Support who is unable to represent his or her own interests, provided this does not conflict with the Person's right to confidentiality or a previously expressed wish of the Person.
- A Donor
- A Volunteer
- A Parent
- An Advocate
- A Child we support

8.0 Complaints Procedure - Stage 1

Step 1

When a complaint is raised to staff, staff will try to resolve it immediately to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint.

Step 2

Staff will apologise for the fact that there was the need to complain in the first instance and explain the complaints process as described in the procedure steps.

Step 3

Staff will report the complaint to the most senior member of staff on duty and the complaint will be logged in the service or departments complaint file. This must then also be reported to complaints@norwood.org.uk.

Step 4

Formal acknowledgement of all complaints received (whether verbal or written) will be sent by the service or department manager within **3 working days** to the person making the complaint. This can be via letter or email. The acknowledgement will include:

- An invitation to meet and discuss the complaint
- Who will be investigating the complaint
- How the investigation will be handled - the response should state what the investigation will be focused on
- A time limit for the investigation to be concluded. **This will state 28 days**
- The complaints procedure and contact details of bodies that can be accessed in the event of dissatisfaction with the outcome of the investigation

The acknowledgement must also be sent to complaints@norwood.org.uk

Step 5

The Operations Manager / Head of Service / Department Head must identify a complaints investigator who will conduct the complaint investigation. This must be carried out and completed within **28 working days**. In exceptional circumstances, where the investigation is complex this may be extended. However, the person who made the complaint must be informed and told when they will receive an outcome.

Following a full investigation, a response letter will be sent, and this will include the following:

- A summary of the issue from the complainant's point of view.
- Details of the evidence and sources consulted to investigate the issue fully and fairly.
- A presentation of the findings for each issue clearly and concisely described.
- A conclusion, stating clearly whether the issue is "upheld", "partially upheld" or "not upheld"; unless it is ineligible, in which case the reason for this will be given, e.g., out of time or out of jurisdiction.
- An explanation of the outcome and whether any remedial action or learning points arise from the investigation of that issue.
- An apology where the issue is upheld, and shortcomings or failings have been found
- The complainant's rights if not satisfied with the outcome to refer to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- A signature from the most senior person within the service e.g., Operations Manager or Head of Service or Department.

Step 6

The complaint will be closed once confirmation has been received that there is satisfaction with the outcome. In the event of dissatisfaction, Norwood will support the complainant to access further support. All complaint investigation documentation and the final letter must be sent to complaints@norwood.org.uk before the complaint can be closed.

9.0 Appeals Process - Stage 2

After receiving the outcome of the in-depth investigation, the complainant has ten working days to consider this. If they are dissatisfied with Norwood's response, they must contact the Complaints Officer within that period. The Complaints Officer will acknowledge this within 3 further working days.

The Complaints Officer will arrange a review panel whose purpose is to consider the investigation and form a view about the extent to which it has satisfactorily addressed the original complaint. The Complaints Officer should aim to convene the review panel within 20 working days of receiving the appeal against the formal stage outcome. The review panel will not reinvestigate complaints, but it will consider the adequacy of the in-depth investigation and try to resolve the complaint.

If the complaint concerns a service involving a child, the panel must consist of a new independent person, a senior manager, and a lay leader (one of whom will be the chair). If the complaint is about anything else, the panel must consist of three people, chosen to reflect the nature of the complaint. The chair of the review panel should invite the complainant to the review panel meeting and any other appropriate people such as witnesses. The Complaints Officer must also attend the review panel

10.0 Internal escalation and appeals

A resident or tenant (or representative) can request that their complaint be escalated to stage 2 if they are dissatisfied with the initial response at stage 1. There may be rare and exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to immediately escalate a new complaint to the final stage of the internal process. This will be at the Director's discretion.

11.0 Unresolved Complaints - External Stage

There are many bodies that can support or will need to be informed of unresolved complaints:

Care Quality Commission	Website: www.cqc.org.uk Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk Phone: 03000 616161	Care Quality Commission, National Correspondence, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4PA
<p>The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (for those Service Users that are funded by local authority-funded social services care or self-funded). Individuals have the right to raise their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This is a free service and individuals can contact their Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman as below:</p>		
The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	Website: www.lgo.org.uk/how-to-complain Email: advice@lgo.org.uk Phone: 0845 602 1983 or 024 7682 1960,	The Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH
Ofsted - For Children and Family services	Website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-about-childrens-social-care-services-to-ofsted Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Phone: 0300 123 1231	
Fundraising regulator - Poor fundraising practice	Website: https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/complaints Phone: 0300 999 3407	Fundraising Regulator 2nd Floor, CAN Mezzanine 49-51 East Road London, N1 6AH

Local Authority Complaints Teams

Individuals have the right to raise concerns and complaints about adult social care regardless of whether they pay for their own care and support or if the Council funds it. Individuals can make a complaint about Norwood where we provide services on the Council's behalf.

Professional Bodies

If a complaint involves the serious misconduct of a healthcare professional, their relevant professional body can be informed, and this is determined on an individual case basis in discussion with the Senior Manager within the service

For any external bodies managing complaints, Norwood will work with the external body providing information as requested within any agreed timescales expected.

Complaint involving a child

If the complaint concerns a service involving a child, the Investigating Complaints Officer must also appoint an Independent Person to work alongside the Investigating Officer to form an independent view of the complaint. The Independent Person should provide an independent and objective view of the investigation; see the same relevant files and documents as the Investigating Officer; participate in all relevant interviews and discussions; read the Investigating Officer's report and produce their own report on the investigation; comment on the complaint and state whether they agree with the Investigating Officer's findings; and explain, where necessary, their reasons for considering the investigation to be unfair or incomplete and to advise the complainant of these in their report.

12.0 Refusing to accept a complaint

We will not discriminate against anyone who makes a complaint. If a complainant behaves inappropriately in making a complaint, we will seek to manage that behaviour as necessary, while treating the complaint like any other. However, there will be some rare occasions when we will not accept a complaint, examples of this are given below (this list is not exhaustive):

- Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour, which is threatening, abusive or aggressive
- Where the issue giving rise to the complaint happened over 12 months ago.
- The same matters have been fully addressed under a previous complaint.
- Where the complaint is a dispute over a matter that is already the subject of legal proceedings.

If we do not accept a complaint for any of the reason, including those described above, we will write to the complainant within 14 calendar days providing our reasons. The complainant will also be told of their option to appeal this decision by contacting the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Where the complaint isn't related to a care service the complainant will be informed of who they can appeal to which may include the organisations detailed in section 11.0

13.0 Mediation

We will explore the use of mediation by an external organisation where it is appropriate

14.0 The Complaints Log

A record will be held of all complaints raised and contain the following information:

- Each complaint received
- Subject matter and outcome
- Details of any reason for delay where investigations took longer than the agreed response period
- The date the report of outcome was sent to the complainant

Where complaints relate to a Service User, a copy of the complaint will be held in their care records so that the Service User can reflect on the recommendations.

Where complaints are raised by telephone, the log will include the date and time of the call, and this will be followed up with written confirmation of the areas discussed.

Where a complaint indicates the potential abuse of Service Users, safeguarding policies will be followed as per local authority expectation and necessary notifications made to the Care Quality Commission. The Local authority's reporting procedure for notifying them of complaints will be followed.

Where complaints are to be shared as part of learning, the complaint will be anonymised so there is no identifiable Service User information.

15.0 Investigations

All investigations will be managed by using the following approach:

- Investigating the facts
- Assessing evidence
- Review of records
- Interviewing those involved

Where necessary, advice and support will be sourced via senior managers within the organisation. The complaint must be investigated by a member of staff with the knowledge, experience, and seniority to undertake the investigation robustly.

Confidentiality of information will be always considered, and staff will adhere to the confidentiality policies and relevant codes of practice.

If an investigation of a complaint results in disciplinary action of staff within Norwood, the complaint will continue to its conclusion. The complainant will be informed that the investigation has led to disciplinary process, but the details of the outcome or ongoing investigation will remain confidential.

16.0 Compliments

Receiving compliments is an opportunity to celebrate and recognise success. Norwood will ensure that:

- All compliments are shared with staff and displayed in a public area to highlight good practice
- Compliments are anonymised or permission sought before displaying
- Numbers of compliments received are logged as part of a quality assurance programme within services.
- Verbal positive feedback from Service Users and relatives is also deemed as compliments and will be recorded and shared with colleagues
- Compliments form a core agenda item at staff, Service User, and relative meetings

Managers must include compliments to their daily update for Operations Managers to share.

17.0 Suggestions

Suggestions can be made verbally or in writing and generally are in response to seeking a means of changing practice for the better.

- Suggestions are not complaints, but in some circumstances, if they are not considered or actioned, they could lead to a complaint
- When suggestions are raised in meetings or as part of a conversation, these will be documented and then outcomes of such suggestions recorded to show consideration
- Staff will be encouraged to share their suggestions or suggestions received by relatives and Service Users with the Service Manager
- The Service Manager will consider implementing a suggestions system to encourage comments from Service Users, staff, and visitors

18.0 Audit

Regular monitoring and audits will take place to ensure that staff are upholding the Complaints Policy. Theme and Trends will be reviewed and reported monthly and be submitted to the Board.

19.0 Regulated Legislation

- Compensations Act 2006
- The Care Act 2014
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR

20.0 References

- [Legislation.gov.uk, \(2009\), The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints \(England\) Regulations 2009.](#)
- [Parliamentary and health service ombudsman, \(2017\), What to do before you come to us.](#)
- [SCIE \(2020\) Dealing with Concerns from people who use care services – Guidance for providers](#)
- [NICE, \(2018\), Decision-making and mental capacity - Guidelines NG108.](#)
- [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, \(2018\), Adult social care guides launched to help providers deal with complaints better.](#)
- [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman \(2021\) Resources for Social Care Providers](#)

21.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if guidance, legislation, or best practice changes.

22.0 Equality Impact Assessment

Norwood has undertaken an equality analysis during the review of this policy. This statement is a written record that demonstrates that we have shown due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with respect to the characteristics protected by equality law.