

Re-Use Littleborough

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Version: 1.0

Approved by: Trustees

Approval Date: _____

Review Date: _____

1. Purpose

Re-Use Littleborough is committed to providing a high-quality, respectful and professional service to everyone we support and work alongside. We recognise that, despite our best efforts, concerns or complaints may arise.

This policy explains how complaints will be handled fairly, consistently, confidentially and promptly. We believe complaints provide an opportunity to improve our services and strengthen trust within our community.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints made by or about:

- Service users and beneficiaries
- Members of the public
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Staff (where employed)
- Donors
- Suppliers and contractors
- Partner organisations
- Local authorities and other agencies

This policy does not replace formal employment or disciplinary procedures.

3. Our Principles

We will:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Listen carefully and without prejudice.
- Investigate complaints fairly and impartially.

- Keep information confidential wherever possible.
- Resolve complaints as quickly as reasonably possible.
- Learn from complaints to improve our services.

No one will be disadvantaged for making a genuine complaint in good faith.

4. What Is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about:

- The quality of our service.
- The behaviour of a volunteer, trustee or member of staff.
- A decision made by the charity.
- Communication or lack of communication.
- Health and safety concerns.
- Equality or discrimination concerns.
- Financial or administrative issues.
- Any action or omission by Re-Use Littleborough.

5. Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, concerns should first be raised informally with the relevant volunteer, team leader or trustee.

Many issues can be resolved quickly through discussion without the need for a formal investigation.

6. Formal Complaints

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint should be submitted.

Complaints should include:

- Name and contact details.
- Date of incident.
- Details of what happened.
- Names of anyone involved.
- Any supporting evidence.
- The outcome being sought.

Complaints may be submitted by email or in writing to the Chair of Trustees or another nominated trustee.

Anonymous complaints will be considered where sufficient evidence exists.

7. Acknowledgement

We will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within **five working days**.

The acknowledgement will include:

- Confirmation that the complaint has been received.
- Who is investigating.
- Expected timescales.
- Any further information required.

8. Investigation

The investigating trustee (or independent person where appropriate) will:

- Review all relevant information.
- Speak to those involved.
- Obtain witness statements where necessary.
- Consider documentary evidence.
- Keep accurate records.

Investigations will be impartial and confidential.

9. Response Times

We aim to:

- Acknowledge complaints within **5 working days**.
- Complete investigations within **20 working days**.

Where this is not possible, the complainant will be kept informed of progress.

10. Outcome

Following the investigation, the complainant will receive a written response explaining:

- Findings.
- Whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

- Any actions to be taken.
- Any lessons learned.
- Information about the appeals process.

11. Appeals

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal within **20 working days**.

The appeal should explain why they disagree with the decision and provide any new information.

Where possible, the appeal will be considered by trustees not previously involved.

The appeal decision will normally be final.

12. Complaints About Trustees

Complaints concerning a trustee should be submitted to the Chair of Trustees.

If the complaint concerns the Chair, it should be submitted to another trustee who has had no prior involvement.

Independent advice may be sought where appropriate.

13. Complaints About Volunteers

Complaints involving volunteers will be investigated fairly.

Possible outcomes include:

- No further action.
- Additional training.
- Mediation.
- Formal warning.
- Removal from volunteer duties where appropriate.

14. Complaints Against Service Users

Occasionally volunteers may need to report inappropriate behaviour by service users.

These reports will be investigated in the same fair and respectful manner.

The charity reserves the right to suspend or withdraw services where there is:

- Violence
- Threatening behaviour

- Abuse
- Harassment
- Criminal activity
- Repeated serious misconduct

15. Vexatious or Persistent Complaints

Where complaints are found to be malicious, abusive or repeatedly unreasonable, the trustees may decide to:

- Limit communication.
- Require written correspondence only.
- Decline to investigate repeated issues already fully considered.

This will only occur after careful consideration.

16. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled confidentially.

Information will only be shared with those directly involved in investigating or resolving the complaint.

Records will be managed in accordance with UK data protection legislation.

17. Learning From Complaints

The trustees will regularly review complaints to identify:

- Trends
- Service improvements
- Training needs
- Policy changes
- Risk management improvements

18. Records

A confidential complaints register will include:

- Complaint reference number
- Date received
- Complainant's name

- Summary of complaint
- Investigator
- Outcome
- Actions taken
- Date closed

Records will normally be retained for six years unless legal requirements state otherwise.

19. Equality and Diversity

Complaints will be handled fairly regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Any other protected characteristic

Reasonable adjustments will be made where required.

20. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation or operational requirements change.

Complaint Form

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Date of Incident:

Details of Complaint:

People Involved (if known):

Evidence Attached:

Outcome You Are Seeking:

Signature:

Date:

Complaints Register Template