

Complaints Policy

Introduction

The PCPLD Network (the Network) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy is to:

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint;
- Publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint;
- Make sure everyone connected with the Network knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way;
- Make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired;
- Gather information, which helps us to improve what we do.

1.1. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the Network or its members.

1.2. Where Complaints Originate

Complaints may come from any person or organisation that has a legitimate interest in or relationship with the Network.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

1.3. Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

1.4. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Trustees of the Network

Procedure

1.5. Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to the Network at 'North Beneknowle', Diptford, Totnes, Devon TQ9 7LU or by e-mail at aes59@me.com

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 07765253090 or in person to any Trustee of the Network.

1.6. Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

The person who receives a phone call or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint;
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number;
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to the Network

- Tell the complainant that there is a complaints procedure;
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take;
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see **Appendix I**.

Details of the complaint should be recorded on the 'Complaint Record Sheet' and be passed to the Trustees of the Network, see **AppendixII**.

1.7. Resolving Complaints

1.7.1. Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If that person has received the complaint, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Secretary of Trustees or the Chair of Trustees within one week.

On receiving the complaint, the Secretary of Trustees records it in the complaints log - see **AppendixIII**. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond to the Secretary of the Network.

The person handling the complaint within a week should acknowledge complaints. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint's procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

1.7.2. Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the Network for further investigation.

The request for further review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair of the Network may investigate the facts of the case themselves or if the complaint is against the Chair, another Trustee will investigate. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Trust decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with the resolution.

1.7.3. External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-charities>

1.8. Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Network may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair of the Trust should not also have her/him as the person leading a Stage Two review.

1.9. Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints Procedures are reviewed every three years to identify any trends, which may indicate a need to take further action.

Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

Try to:

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation;
- Listen - allows the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to 'let off steam';
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry;
- Show an interest in what is being said;
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details;
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary;
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down;
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (*even if you feel that they are being unreasonable*) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation for example 'I understand that this situation is frustrating for you';
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise;
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue;
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve;
- Don't promise things you can't deliver;
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met;
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told;
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal.

Complaint Record Sheet

Reference No:

Date: Time: Telephone/ In Person/ Written

Received from: Received by:

Name of organisation (*if applicable*):

Address:

.....

.....

Post Code:

Tel No:

Details of Complaint or Compliment:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Brief details of immediate response:

.....

.....

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Further action required: YES/NO

Attach any supporting documentation to form if applicable.

Letter of Acknowledgement: YES/NO Date Sent:..... Meeting arranged: YES/NO

Investigation required by Trustees: YES/NO Date investigation
completed:.....

Response letter sent: YES/NO

Date:

Further action required: YES/NO

Date complaint closed:

Complaints Log

Ref No	Name of Complainant & Date Received	Date Ack Sent	Nature of Complaint	Resolution	Resolution Date	Passed to Trustees YES/NO	Final Resolution Date
1.							