

1 Purpose of this Complaints Policy

- 1.1 The purpose of the Charity's Complaints Policy is to encourage feedback from individuals and organisations. The policy does not apply to employees, or to volunteers providing a service for the Charity. There are separate processes for staff and volunteers to use to raise concerns.
- 1.2 All complaints to the Charity will be dealt with constructively, impartially and effectively in accordance with the Complaints Policy and the related Complaints Procedure. The Complaints Policy plays an important role in improving the Charity's accountability to its stakeholders and supports the improvement of its services by responding to feedback.
- 1.3 Generally, the purpose of this Complaints Policy is to resolve disputes informally without resorting to formal investigation. Settling matters promptly by listening to the complainant and putting things right is in the best interests of both the complainant and the Charity.

2 What this Complaints Policy Covers

- 2.1 The policy applies to all of the Charity's activities.
- 2.2 A complaint has to be about some action or omission for which the Charity is responsible or is within its sphere of influence. A complaint could be a concern about, for example:
- 2.3 the service received by somebody that the Charity has worked with;
 - the behaviour and/or professional competence of the Charity's employees, agency staff, volunteers, or providers of services on behalf of the Charity;
 - a disputed decision relating to the provision of the Charity's services;
 - an activity relating to fundraising campaigns or promotions;
 - the quality or appropriateness of the Charity's services; and/or
 - the Charity's published strategy or policies.

The items listed above are examples and do not constitute an exhaustive list.

- 2.4 A complaint is not:
 - a general enquiry about the work of the Charity;
 - a request for information about the Charity's services;
 - related to a contractual or legal dispute;
 - a formal request for disclosure of information, e.g. under the Data Protection Act 2018;
 - the immediate resolution of a minor dissatisfaction which staff and volunteers may deal with on a day-to-day basis; or
 - issues raised in relation to a consultation; such issues will be dealt with as part of the consultation process.
- 2.5 In relation to who can complain, a complaint may come from:

- a child or adult;
- an external organisation (e.g. NGB, health partner, local authority, VCSE organisation, club, private company);
- a relative of somebody entitled to make a complaint; or
- other interested parties.

2.6 This policy applies to all of the Charity's services/activities, including those delivered via telephone or online. The same emphasis will be placed on local resolution, recognising that there may be particular factors affecting how the policy is implemented, for example:

- where individuals choose not to identify themselves;
- the feasibility/appropriateness of meeting with complainants who have received a telephone or online based service; and
- giving feedback to the complainant where this depends on them re-contacting the service.

3 Legal Framework and Related Guidance

3.1 This Complaints Policy takes into account all relevant legal requirements, regulations and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to:

- the Children Act 1989 and 2004;
- Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003;
- other legislation relating to children in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023;
- statutory guidance relevant to the Charity issued by the Charity's regulators, including the Charity Commission; and
- industry best practice, including that contained within the Sport England/UK Sport Code for Sports Governance.

4 Complaints involving Independent Providers of Services to the Charity (e.g. Contractors and Consultants, including Social Workers)

4.1 In addition to the Charity's own employees and volunteers, this policy applies to consultants or contractors undertaking services for, or on behalf of, the Charity. Every effort will be made to deal with complaints about consultants and contractors in accordance with this policy. The Charity will, where appropriate, report any complaint and/or the outcome of any investigation to the consultant's or contractor's professional body.

5 Complaints from Service Users of other Organisations e.g. Local Authorities

5.1 Some services are provided by the Charity on behalf of a third-party organisation such as a local authority. Unless the contract with the commissioning organisation states otherwise, this Complaints Policy will be used to deal with complaints from a service user about the service provided by the Charity. Complainants may choose to complain

directly to the Charity or via the third-party organisation.

6 Dealing with Complaints

- 6.1 The Charity will make information about how to make a complaint available for individuals and organisations by publishing this policy on its website.
- 6.2 In keeping with the principle of encouraging feedback, this policy does not require that complaints are put in writing. However, in the case of Serious Complaints and/or allegations of professional incompetence/misconduct, complainants are encouraged to put their complaint in writing in order to ensure that the substance of the complaint is clear to all involved in its resolution.
- 6.3 Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with this policy and the related Complaints Procedure.
- 6.4 The Charity is committed to learning from its complaints. It monitors complaints and is committed to making appropriate changes based on the experience and information received via this process.

7 Definitions used in this Policy

- 7.1 **Serious Complaint** means a complaint of a serious nature, for example allegations of professional misconduct or involving alleged harm, or a complaint which meets the criteria for reporting a serious incident as set out in the Charity's "Procedure for Reporting Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission or other Regulators".