

## Compliments and Complaints Policy

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*We love to hear when we are doing something well. However, we are also keen to improve our services and welcome both positive and constructive feedback from any one at any time.*

*Various processes exist for encouraging clients to provide feedback on our services. These are addressed further in the Survivor Involvement policy.*

### **Aim of Policy**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all feedback received by Your Sanctuary is dealt with professionally; compliments are shared and celebrated; complaints and concerns are addressed and resolved at the earliest possible stage in a professional and supportive manner.

### **Policy Statement**

Your Sanctuary welcomes all feedback at any time. This policy is available to all survivors, external individuals and organisations in receipt of Your Sanctuary services or working in partnership with Your Sanctuary. Any individual should be free to make themselves aware of the procedures without fear of prejudice or judgement.

### **Informal Procedure**

Whilst the policy below outlines a formal process for providing feedback to the organisation, including making a formal complaint, an individual may choose an informal approach in the first instance by discussing this with either their support worker or another member of staff. If the informal procedure isn't satisfactory the formal route can still be taken.

### **Providing Feedback**

Feedback can be given in the following ways:

- Email: [feedback@yoursanctuary.org.uk](mailto:feedback@yoursanctuary.org.uk)
- Phone: 01483 776868
- In writing to Head Office: Your Sanctuary 15a Monument Way East, Woking GU21 5LY
- Through a trusted intermediary (e.g., support worker)

Feedback may be given anonymously, but this may limit our ability to respond or address concerns effectively.

### **Procedure**

Positive feedback will be shared with the team and recorded. This may then be used when reviewing what works best in our service. Anonymised positive feedback may be used for funding bids, reports, marketing and on our website. If you do not want your comments used in this way, please inform the person to whom you are providing the feedback. This must then be recorded along with your comments.

In the event of a complaint, the complainant should make their complaint known as soon as possible, but in any event within 3 months of exiting the service.

You can find this policy:

- Displayed clearly in the refuges.
- Verbally explained by the Refuge Support Worker upon arrival to the refuge.
- Verbally explained by the Outreach support Worker.

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- Explained to third parties where required.
- Displayed on the Your Sanctuary website.

The complaints procedure consists of three stages. It's Your Sanctuary's responsibility to ensure that any complainant understands how to use the complaints procedure.

The emphasis at each stage of the complaints procedure is on resolving the problem in a fair and appropriate manner as soon as possible; however, the formal schedule is outlined below.

### Stage 1

We try to resolve all complaints within five working days. We will aim to respond within 10 working days, if this process is going to take longer, we will inform you. The complaint should be brought to the attention of the Operations Lead via: [feedback@yoursanctuary.org.uk](mailto:feedback@yoursanctuary.org.uk)

### Stage 2

If you do not feel the matter has been resolved satisfactorily from our initial response, please request a further investigation which we will acknowledge within 5 working days. This will be escalated to the CEO to address.

We aim to provide a response within 20 working days. Complex complaints may take longer and if this is the case we will keep you informed.

### Stage 3

If you do not feel the matter has been resolved satisfactorily at stage 2, the complaint will be escalated to our board of Trustees. We aim to acknowledge your request for a further investigation within 5 working days. We aim to provide a response within 20 working days. Complex complaints may take longer and if this is the case we will keep you informed. This is the final stage for our internal complaints procedure.

## Your Sanctuary responsibilities when dealing with the complaint.

The member of staff investigating the complaint will endeavour to communicate with the complainant directly via phone or email.

The complaint will be recorded on our secure leadership team site and include the following details:

- Initial complaint(s) and any subsequent investigations
- Date complaint(s) made and any escalation
- Chronology of events
- Person(s) involved
- Actions taken
- Correspondence

Your Sanctuary should inform the complainant of the outcome in writing (and record) and highlight:

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- Outline of complaint details
- Action taken
- Whether or not the complaint was resolved
- Learning taken forward

If the complaint moves to a stage 2, Your Sanctuary will ensure that there is:

- An evaluation of the actions that have taken place to date to try and resolve the problem.
- Identification any area(s) of remaining dissatisfaction
- Recommendations for further means of resolving the problem.

If the complaint moves to stage 3, Your Sanctuary will ensure the following:

- The Board of Trustees will review all the information and interview those involved
- Produce a report on the complaint and our responses to it, evaluating and recommending whether there are other actions or responses that could be taken in resolving the complaint and judging whether or not the complaint is substantiated.
- A letter will be sent to the complainant and all concerned explaining the reasons for the decisions.

### Refuge only

If the complaint is regarding our refuge service, the complainant will have recourse to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The Board of Trustees, CEO and Operations Lead have a duty to provide the client with the information needed to contact this organisation and the Operations Lead will support the client at this stage.

If the complaint is taken to this external stage a record of this will be made.

### Third Party Complaints

Matters relating to individual clients remain confidential. In dealing with any complaint concerning the service provided to an individual client, confidentiality and the safety of the client will be paramount. This principle also applies to former clients.

Neither managers nor the Board will enter into any discussion with any third party concerning the details of the service provided to any individual client, or former client, unless the complainant is acting on behalf of and with the explicit and recorded permission of the client.

However, neither managers nor the Board will enter into any discussion with any third party whom the client/former client has previously alleged to be a perpetrator of domestic abuse, even if the client has given that person permission to act on their behalf.

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At no stage of any Third Party complaint under consideration may the complainant be accompanied by any person whom the client/former client has previously alleged to be a perpetrator of domestic violence or abuse.

Any complaint made by a third party acting on behalf of and with the permission of a client, concerning the service provided to that client, must be reported immediately to the Board. In the first instance senior managers may be asked to seek to resolve the matter, depending on the nature of the complaint, and to inform the Board of the outcome.

If a complaint by a third party representing a former client, with that client's permission, is under consideration, but cannot be resolved by senior managers then the matter will be referred to the Board. The complainant will be invited to put their complaint in writing and managers will be asked to submit a report on the actions taken to try to resolve the matter. A holding response will be sent as soon as is reasonably possible and an investigation conducted. When this has been completed the Board will respond to the complainant.

### Monitoring

Your Sanctuary welcomes feedback and any complaints received will be periodically reviewed and where applicable used to improve service delivery. As part of our ongoing monitoring the Senior Leadership Team will monitor the number of formal complaints, the time they took to resolve and the outcome.

### Safeguarding and Confidentiality

We take safeguarding seriously. If feedback or complaints raise safeguarding concerns, we will follow our Safeguarding Policy and may need to share information with relevant authorities. All feedback will be handled confidentially, and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.