COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

A) INTRODUCTION

NH&SCVS is committed to ensuring that its work is of the highest quality. We believe that through effective management and investigation of comments, compliments and complaints we can identify learning to achieve high quality work and continuous improvement as an organisation. The following principles underpin our approach to handling comments, compliments and complaints.

- NH&SCVS recognises that comments, compliments and complaints are an important part of customer feedback.
- The procedure is fair, easy and as transparent as possible.
- The procedure is accessible to all, regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, belief or sexual orientation.
- We ensure our service users, volunteers and members of the public are aware of our complaints policy and procedure through our communications as well as being easy to access on our website.
- Making a complaint will not harm or prejudice the service that is given to the complainant.
- Concerns and complaints are dealt with efficiently, appropriately and are investigated within the agreed time frame.
- Complainants are treated with respect and courtesy and receive appropriate support throughout the handling of the complaint.
- Complainants receive a timely and appropriate response, identifying the outcome of any investigation.
- Action is taken where necessary in the light of the outcome of the complaint. This might include an explanation or an apology and if relevant and appropriate, information on any action taken.
- Learning from complaints will be used to improve NH&SCVS's work and drive forward a culture of continuous improvement.
- It is very important that every effort is made to ensure anyone making a complaint understands the outcome of their complaint.
- NH&SCVS will recognise people's reasoning for making a complaint.

B) AIM OF POLICY

Feedback from any of customers, volunteers, third parties, funders, families or any other stakeholders and how we deal with it is invaluable in helping us to continuously improve. Negative feedback and complaints are particularly helpful in pinpointing what we need to do better, and if we deal with complaints effectively, we can often improve our relationships with whoever we have contact with.

C) COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If a complaint is about the CEO then it should be addressed to: Chair of the Board of Trustees (marked private and confidential) and sent to: North Herts and Stevenage CVS, 2 Walsworth Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire. SG4 9SP

Stage One (Informal)

- To make an initial complaint (Stage 1), please speak to or email the individual(s) concerned or their line manager and we will endeavour to satisfy your complaint and let you know of any remedial action that is to be taken.

- If you don't know who to contact or do not wish to contact the individual involved, please email clarebernardin@nhcvs.org.uk. All complaints will be acknowledged by the member of staff to whom you communicated your complaint within five working days from the date it is received (unless you receive an out of office starting an alternative contact in which case please forward to the appropriate contact).
- For us to resolve your issue to the best of our ability, please include as much detail as possible regarding your complaint, including any relevant communications or documentation.
- We will respond to Stage 1 complaints within 7 working days of the acknowledgement date.

Stage Two (Formally registering a complaint)

- If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage 1, or you would prefer your complaint to be formally investigated, you can request your complaint to be escalated to Stage 2, either through your contact at Stage 1, or directly.
- Please submit the details of your complaint verbally by telephone, or in person, electronically by email to clarebernadin@nhcvs.org.uk or by post to: Clare Bernardin, North Herts and Stevenage CVS, 2 Walsworth Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire. SG4 9SP
- Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be assigned to investigate your complaint and you will receive a full written response within 20 working days from the date of the acknowledgement.
- If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, you will be given the opportunity to speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and given the option to appeal (Stage 3).

Stage Three (Appeal)

- To appeal, please outline the reasons for your dissatisfaction in writing or electronically to the CEO to hannahgray@nhcvs.org.uk
- This will be the final decision of the complaints process and will ensure the CEO has reviewed the investigation, made any further enquiries before delivering the reason for the final decision.
- The CEO will write within 30 working days of receiving the appeal

Date of policy	Version number	Details	Date of review	Author
22.02.2024	V1.00	Updated policy	February 2026	C.Bernardin

NH&SCVS COMPLAINTS FORM

This form is to be completed for all complaints received by whatever means (including in writing, by email, in person or by phone). Please attach copies of any written correspondence to this form when complete and send it to the CEO.

PART 1: COMPLAINANT DETAILS:

NAME:	**REFERENCE NUMBER:**
PHONE NUMBER:	**ORGANISATION:**
RECEIVED VIA:	**EMAIL ADDRESS:**
ADDRESS:	
COMPLAINT RECEIVED BY:	**DATE RECEIVED:**
COMPLAINT RESOLVED BY:	**DATE RESOLVED:**

PART 2: DETAILS OF PROBLEM:

PART 3: DETAILS OF PROBLEM RESOLUTION