



Customer Complaints, Compliments & Comments Policy

Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:
April 2025

Purpose

The Warrington Wolves Foundation is committed to providing the best possible service for everyone who we support and work with. We recognise that the way we manage and respond to complaints, compliments and comments is an important part of this. By receiving feedback from the people who use our services, we can make sure that we did the best we can in the context of what we are funded to do. And if we've done something not as well as they would have liked, we need to know that too. Only then can we learn and improve.

This policy uses the following definitions:

a **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction about a standard of service

a **compliment** is an expression of praise concerning a service received

a **comment** is a suggestion for how a service can be improved

Principles

All comments, compliments and complaints will be dealt with using the following principles;

- Honest, constructive and open
- Timely, dealing with feedback as quickly and effectively as possible
- Consistent and fair, avoiding bias
- Sensitive, with due care being paid to individual differences and needs
- Respectful, making sure anyone giving feedback is kept informed of progress
- Accessible, ensuring appropriate support is in place to enable participation
- Confidential – we cannot respond to any complaints, compliments or comments that are anonymous, but confidentiality will be respected at all times as set out in this policy

These guidelines have been devised to ensure fairness and equity for all parties involved in the handling of complaints, compliments and comments and to enable a balanced and objective approach to be taken so that a satisfactory conclusion can be reached.

These guidelines relate to:

- Courses, services or facilities provided by The Foundation
- Action or lack of action taken by The Foundation and its staff

The guidelines do not cover:

- Disciplinary issues
- Matters governed by other separate procedures such as harassment, appeals against exclusion or academic appeals

There is ongoing monitoring of complaints, compliments and comments received by The Foundation. This is carried out by the Foundation Director in association with the Board of Trustees. A summary of complaints, compliments and comments received within the calendar year is used to inform self-assessment and strategic planning, and is shared with the Board of Trustees at the Annual General meeting.

Responding to Complaints

Every reasonable effort will be made to deal promptly and efficiently with all complaints, to investigate them thoroughly and objectively and to seek to resolve them satisfactorily. Whilst every complaint is taken seriously and investigated fully, every effort is also made to ensure that staff of The Foundation understand that they have equal rights in the process and that they are treated with fairness and objectivity.

Complaints will be dealt with positively, constructively and as far as possible confidentially. If a complaint is upheld The Foundation will seek to provide a reasonable and appropriate response and will correct any mistakes or misunderstandings and will take any other action as appropriate. Where a complaint is upheld against an individual or group this will be dealt with confidentially. Action will be through internal processes and procedures and specific details not reported to the complainant.

Although complaints will be dealt with in confidence this is with the proviso that an individual against whom a complaint is made has the right to be supplied with a copy of the complaint made against them.

Complaints against members of staff of The Foundation are always classified as formal complaints. The Foundation Director must therefore be notified of the complaint.

The Foundation will treat all complaints seriously and without discrimination. However, where an investigation concludes there is reasonable grounds to believe that the complaint is frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice, appropriate action will be taken against the complainant. The Foundation reserves the right not to investigate where ongoing complaints are made and grounds for complaint have previously not be found.

The time limits set out in these guidelines will normally be followed. However, where for good reason this is not possible, the complainant will be kept notified of progress.

The effectiveness of any complaints procedure depends on The Foundation being able to collect appropriate information from parties involved in order to investigate the matter properly. For this reason, anonymous complaints will not be dealt with under these guidelines.

These guidelines comprise of a number of stages. Most complaints can be resolved informally by individuals pursuing matters directly with relevant staff. Only where these informal routes have been pursued and the complainant remains dissatisfied, should the formal complaint be invoked.

Informal Complaints Procedure

Most complaints can be resolved informally and where practical a complaint should be dealt with as close as possible to the point at which it arises.

This relates to informal complaints, such as those received verbally and/or those relating to what the complainant views as relatively minor incidents.

Although all these complaints are classified as “informal complaints” for the purposes of these guidelines, they are all taken seriously and should be investigated thoroughly by the appropriate member of staff.

The member of staff who receives an informal complaint will look into the matter and give a verbal response to the complainant/s within **10 working days** of the complaint being registered.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, then a formal complaint in writing should be made.

Formal Complaints

Some complaints may be instigated immediately as formal complaints and should therefore be made in writing to the Foundation Director. Formal complaints cannot be made verbally. However, should the complainant wish, a member of the Board of Trustees can record the details of the complaint for the complainant to sign at a later date (i.e. complaints received by telephone).

Where formal written complaints are received by other staff at The Foundation, these should be forwarded to the Foundation Director for logging in the first instance.

The formal complaint should be set out in writing, either by email/letter and wherever possible, using the Complaints Form appended to these guidelines.

This should detail:

- The nature of the complaint
- The informal steps already taken with full details of the response received
- A statement setting out why the complainant remains dissatisfied

Under normal operating circumstances receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of its receipt.

The Foundation Director will co-ordinate and act as administrator for the duration of the complaint investigation.

Where appropriate, the Foundation Director may require a detailed discussion with the complainant to agree the terms of reference for the investigation, confirm key points of concern or to obtain further particulars of the complaint.

The Foundation Director may wish to convene a hearing involving the complainant and any other persons involved in the matter so they can submit their respective cases. A representative from the People Action Group will also be invited where a complaint about a member of staff is being investigated.

All parties involved including participants and staff can be accompanied by a person of their choice to offer support, assistance or advice at any meetings during the investigation. The person can be a friend, recognised trade union member or member of staff but should not constitute legal representation.

After completing the investigation, the Foundation Director will make a decision. Where the complaint is upheld the Board of Trustees have authority to refund fees or offer small gestures as an apology and to restore goodwill. The Director will also ensure remedial action is taken to ensure similar complaints do not arise in the future.

The decision will be communicated in writing to the complainant and all other relevant parties, normally within **15 working days** of the acknowledgement of the complaint. Where the investigation is likely to take longer all parties will be informed and kept up to date at regular intervals subject to a maximum total investigation period of **30 working days**.

Appeals Process

The stages of the guidelines set out above have been established to allow a fair and thorough investigation of a complaint and to ensure that it is dealt with objectively. If the complainant, or any party involved in the investigation, believes that a complaint has not been dealt with properly or fairly, they may submit a letter of appeal to the Foundation Director within 5 days of receipt of the decision.

The Board of Trustees will consider the circumstances of the case on the basis of the documentary evidence and such advice felt necessary, in order to determine whether there is prima facie evidence to support the complainant's appeal that the case was not handled properly or fairly.

In exceptional circumstances, where appropriate and should sufficient evidence exist for further investigation, the Board of Trustees may lead a further enquiry.

The Board of Trustees' decision will then be final on the basis of the evidence and advice available or in the case of a further investigation on the basis of the recommendations of the Foundation Director.

The Board of Trustees' decision will be communicated in writing, normally within **10 working days** of the date the request for review was received.

In exceptional circumstances where the complainant is still dissatisfied with the decision reached by the Board of Trustees, complaints can be pursued with the Charities Commission.

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMMENTS FORM

The purpose of this form is for individuals to register a complaint or log a compliment/comment. Complainants can also be made in writing by letter or email to the Foundation Director.

Personal Details

Name _____

Email _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Tel: _____

Details of complaint, compliment or comment (A brief summary of the details including times & dates)

Informal action already taken and details of the response

Signature _____ Date _____

Received by Date

Copy provided for individual submitting form