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| Policy Owner: Head of Business Development, Quality & Compliance | |
| Version: 2.00 | Relevant to: All Onside Staff and Volunteers |
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| Related Policies: SFRHR46 Staff Code of Conduct Policy | |
| Resources: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission Complain about a charity - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) | |
| Policy Amendments/Updates: | |

Complaints, Comments & Feedback Policy

Onside is committed to ensuring that its work is of the highest quality and people experience the organisation as effective, responsive and designed to meet individual needs. We believe that listening to the views of those using our services or involved with us in other ways is essential and a key element in achieving high quality services.

- ✿ The following principles underpin our Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedures:
- ✿ Onside recognises that compliments and complaints are an important part of feedback
- ✿ The policy and procedures are designed to be fair and transparent to those using our services, staff, volunteers, and all those who interact and are involved with our organisation
- ✿ The policy and procedure should be accessible to all regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, belief or sexual orientation
- ✿ Making a complaint will not harm or prejudice the service that is given to the complainant
- ✿ Concerns and complaints are dealt with efficiently and are properly investigated following a clear and transparent process
- ✿ Complainants are treated with respect and courtesy and receive appropriate support and information throughout the process of dealing with the complaint
- ✿ Complainants receive a timely and appropriate response. This will identify the outcome of any investigations and any actions taken where necessary as a result of the investigation.
- ✿ Learning from complaints will be used within Onside's Continuous Improvement Framework and disseminated through appropriate channels such as supervision, service reviews and team meetings in order to improve services
- ✿ If the complainant is not happy with the response to their complaint, they will have the right to appeal

Providing Feedback and Comments on the services delivered by Onside or any aspect of the organisation.

If you use Onside services, you will be given an opportunity to provide feedback on your experience. You will also be offered a choice about what is the best way for you to do this including telephone, text, email and a postal form. Those using our services and anyone else involved with our organisation can also provide feedback at any time by sending this to our feedback email: feedback@onside-advocacy.org.uk

Making a complaint about Onside

Our Approach when people make a complaint

We aim to:

- ✿ Clearly understand the persons concerns and the issues they are raising
- ✿ Understand fully the resolution they are seeking
- ✿ Ensure we fully understand the facts of the situation and identify a resolution that addresses the key elements of the complaint
- ✿ Resolve issues informally whenever the complainant is happy for us to take this approach and it is appropriate to the nature of the complaint

Complaints will be investigated objectively, fairly and thoroughly in a positive problem-solving manner and in line with our complaints timetable. No service will be delayed, suspended or withdrawn because a complaint has been made using this procedure.

If people require assistance to make a complaint, they will be offered help to put forward their concerns and the issues and the resolution they are looking for. This will then be documented and used as part of the normal procedure. If it is not appropriate for an Onside advocate or other member of the team to offer this help, then efforts will be made to arrange support from an advocate or other appropriate person independent of Onside.

Stage 1 - Informal

In many cases a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about or by their immediate line manager. If the complainant wishes to have their complaint considered through this informal process, then it may be able to be resolved swiftly by the person concerned or their line manager without recourse to the Stage 2 Formal process.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved details of it should be passed to the Onside's Head of Business Development, Quality & Compliance within 5 working days of it being received. The complaint will be recorded in the complaints log.

Stage 2 - Formal

If a complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily at Stage 1 or the person does not feel it is appropriate to seek resolution directly with the person concerned or their line manager or through an informal process then the complaint will proceed to Stage 2, to be formally investigated. Whoever takes the complaint on behalf of Onside will take basic details and refer

the matter directly and quickly to the appropriate manager, usually the manager of the service about which the complaint has been made. If this is not possible then the complaint should be forwarded to another manager within the Leadership Team. A letter or email acknowledging the complaint should always be sent within 2 working days, setting out at a minimum, the usual timescales within which we aim to resolve complaints and the name of the person investigating the complaint.

The manager investigating the complaint will always contact the complainant for further information and to seek clarification on issues raised and resolution(s) being sought. This contact should take place within 3 working days of the complaint being received. We will also ascertain if any further support is needed for the complainant to use the complaints process.

The manager investigating the complaint will then carry out their investigation, keeping a comprehensive record detailing the complainant's issues, research undertaken, people spoken to, records accessed and the outcome of the investigation. The conclusion should reflect an impartial and objective examination of the issues and information and be clearly supported by evidence. This should then be written up in a letter to the complainant in a format they can understand and follow. Our aim is to provide a Complaints Outcome letter within 20 working days of receiving the formal complaint. If for any reason this is not possible then the complainant will be kept informed of the reasons for any delay and given a date by which the investigation will be completed.

If the complaint or any part of it has been upheld, then this should be clearly set out in the Complaint Outcome letter with an apology and information on how we plan to put things right and what actions we will be taking.

If the investigation has concluded that the complaint and concerns raised are not founded, then the reasons for this will be explained and information given on the right to request a review of this decision.

Stage 3 - Review

If a complainant is not satisfied with the Outcome at Stage 2, they can request a review of the decision by the Chief Executive of Onside. They should set out their reasons for dissatisfactions in writing by letter or email to the Chief Executive within 28 days of receiving a Complaint Outcome letter. If anyone requires additional assistance to do this then they should contact the Head of Business Development, Quality & Compliance.

The Chief Executive will review the complaint, investigations and outcome and will then write to the complainant setting out their findings. This will identify any areas where they believe the conclusions are incorrect and any actions to be taken. This review will in usual circumstances be completed with 20 working days.

Stage 4 - Appeal

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the Review stage, then they can ask for the complaint and investigation process to be looked at by the Chair of the Onside Board of Trustees. The reason for the appeal must be set in a letter to the Chair of Trustees within 28 days

of receiving notification of the outcome of the Review process. The Chair and two other Trustees with no previous involvement in the complaint will meet to consider the appeal. The Chair will then write to the Complainant within 28 days to confirm the final decision and any action that may be taken in relation to their complaint.

If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, then you may contact the commissioners of the service. Onside will provide you with the Commissioners contact details for the specific service.

If anyone is dissatisfied with any aspect of Onside's complaints process, they can contact the Charity Commission who will be able to advise on whether they may be able to assist.