



Lifeworks Charity Limited

Complaints' Policy & Procedure V2.0

September 2024

Notice to staff using a paper copy of this guidance, the Intranet holds the most recent version of this guidance. Staff must ensure they are using the most recent guidance.

Owner: Head of Finance & Data Protection

Contents		Page
1	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging	4
2	Introduction	4
3	Purpose	4
4	Scope	4
5	Responsibilities	5
6	Confidentiality	5
7	Receiving Complaints	5
8	Procedure	6
9	Monitoring compliance	7

1 Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

- 1.1 Lifeworks is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion amongst our workforce, alongside everyone we deal with, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best. The Charity, in providing services, is also committed against unlawful discrimination of service users or the public.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Lifeworks is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone we deal with. To achieve this, we need to receive regular feedback about our service.

We will treat as a complaint any expression of dissatisfaction with our services which calls for a response. We listen to complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service.

3 Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to assist the complainant and member of staff receiving the complaint on behalf of Lifeworks, in following process to ensure that any complaint is fully investigated and dealt with promptly and fairly.

Lifeworks believes that if anyone wishes to make a complaint, register a concern or compliment the service we offer they should find it easy to do so. This policy will be made available to all interested parties as and when requested or required. At Lifeworks we view complaints as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services. Likewise, we share compliments with all the staff involved and use them to identify good practice. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and taken seriously whilst compliments are shared appropriately. Lifeworks supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly can be sorted out between the complainant and the Charity.

3.2 Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints' procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint;
- To publicise the existence of our complaints' procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint;
- To make sure everyone at Lifeworks knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way;
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired;
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

4 Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all complaints received, no matter who it is from and how it has been received. ie. Written, email, social media, verbally.

5 Responsibilities

5.1 The **Head of Finance & Governance** with the **Board of Trustees** are ultimately responsible for all complaints received.

5.2 Managers

5.2.1 To ensure that there is a transparent and open process.

5.2.2 Ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and procedure.

5.2.3 Provide support and advice to staff, service users, stake holders and the complainant on the procedure of the policy and guidelines, where necessary.

5.2.4 Take responsibility for Lifeworks' ongoing compliance with this policy.

5.3 Employee responsibility

5.3.1 To familiarise themselves with this policy and other associated policies and guidelines.

5.3.2 To ensure that any complaints received are flagged to the relevant manager and the policy and procedures are adhered to.

6 Confidentiality

6.1 All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

7 Receiving Complaints

7.1 Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media.

7.2 Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint;
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number;
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Lifeworks i.e. Student, Resident, Parent, Social worker etc;
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints' policy and procedure;
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take;
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to submit a written account.

7.3 Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints policy and procedure should be attached.

- 7.4 Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- 7.5 Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

8 Procedure

8.1 1st STAGE – Informal

- Contact the person named in the chart below, by telephone or in writing (email / letter).
- To help ensure a thorough investigation, provide as much information as you can about the problem.
- It is important that the staff have the opportunity to resolve the problem before you refer the matter.
- This matter will be attended to within 14 days and a response made.
- If your complaint is against the person named as stage 1, communication should be made to the person named in Stage 2.

8.2 2nd STAGE - Formal

- Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with the informal procedure Stage1, Lifeworks has a formal procedure for the complaint to be made.
- Lifeworks has made provision for a hearing before a panel consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.
- The procedure allows for the complainant to attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing if they wish.
- The complaints' procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations is provided to the complainant and, where appropriate, the person complained about.
- The action taken by Lifeworks as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) is to be recorded and all correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the relevant regulatory bodies, conducting an inspection, requests access to them.

Please send complaints to the persons and addresses below.

Lifeworks College,
Shinners Bridge, Dartington, Totnes. TQ9 6JD.
Telephone 01803 865075

Stage 1 Sharon Hopkins - Quality Manager – sharonhopkins@lifeworks-uk.org

Stage 2 Karen Dorow karendorow@lifeworks-uk.org

Lifeworks Community,

c/o Lifeworks College, Shidders Bridge, Dartington, Totnes. TQ9 6JD.
Telephone 01803 865075

Stage 1 Lesley Newnham – Team Leader – lesleynewnham@lifeworks-uk.org

Stage 2 Karen Dorow karendorow@lifeworks-uk.org

Lifeworks Charity Limited,

Room 33, Lescaze Offices, Shidders Bridge, Dartington, Totnes. TQ9 6JD.
Telephone 01803 840744

Stage 1 Jess Morris – HR Manager – jessmorris@lifeworks-uk.org

Stage 2 Jo Parsons – joparsons@lifeworks-uk.org

Sesame

Stage 1 Amanda Parnell –Registered Manager,
Bronshill Road, Torquay. TQ1 3HA amandaparnell@lifeworks-uk.org

Stage 2 Karen Dorow – Nominated Individual, c/o Lifeworks College, Shidders
Bridge, Dartington, Totnes. TQ9 6JD. karendorow@lifeworks-uk.org

8.3 3rd STAGE

8.4 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, the matter should then be referred to the Board of Trustees for review.

8.5 The individual can expect a written response within 21 working days. It will be discussed with them how to keep them informed about the status of their complaint during this time.

8.6 The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

8.7 External Stage

As Lifeworks is a registered charity and a provider of regulated services, the complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.

8.8 Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Chair or trustee should not also have the Chair and/or trustee involved as a person leading a Board review.

8.9 Communication During a Complaint Page 6 of 8

Complaints Policy V2.0 – September 2024
It may be appropriate that staff are notified as to the progress and outcome of a

complaint. It is the responsibility of the investigating manager to update staff using the appropriate channels.

We will not engage in conversations regarding complaints on public platforms, such as social media channels. We may remove anything posted on Lifeworks social media if it is deemed inappropriate or has potential to compromise ongoing or future investigations.

9.0 Monitoring Compliance

We will monitor adherence to this policy through periodic spot checks and as a part of our annual audit.

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Policy Information

Title	Complaints' Policy & Procedure V2.0
Document purpose/summary	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that, should the need arise, the general public, Stakeholders, Lifeworks' staff and Service Users are clear about the procedure for making complaints about any of the Charity's services, processes, behaviors or personnel.
Owner	Head of Finance & Data Protection
Policy Department	Operational
Ratification date	September 2024
Review date and frequency	Two years after publication, or earlier if there is a change in evidence
Consultation process	SLT, Operational managers
Ratified by	SLT
Target audience	All Lifeworks staff, Service Users, General Public, Stakeholders
Circulation	Electronic: Breathe HR Written: Upon request to the Policies Administrator Please contact the Policy Administrator if you require this document in an alternative format.
Equality analysis checklist completed	Yes
References/sources of information	Regulatory bodies' best practice
Associated documentation/ cross referenced policies	
Supersedes document	Complaints Policy V1.0 2024

Executive approval is subject to the understanding that the policy owner has followed the organisation process for policy ratification.

Document Review History

Version no.	Type of change: major, minor, none or taken out of use	Date	Author of change	Description of change
V1.0	New Policy	Dec 2023	Laura Fraser-Crewes	Superseding College policy 2016 – general operations' policy required
V2.0	Minor	Sept 2024	Jo Parsons	Receiving complaints