



## **Fife Voluntary Action**

### **Policies and Procedures**

Policy: **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

Applies to: **All Directors, staff, volunteers, placements, contractors and customers**

Approved: **November 2016**

To be Reviewed: **November 2018**

The latest version of all policies and procedures can be found on the shared, company network drive. If you can't access this resource, for whatever reason, please speak to your line manager who will organise access to any or all policies and procedures as required.

If you wish to suggest improvements to this policy and/or procedure, or experience any issues in understanding or complying with it, you should discuss this with your line manager.

# Complaints Policy and Procedure

## Policy Statement

We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve practice and the customer experience. The complaint gives us the opportunity to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint. Handling complaints effectively is important to the organisation.

## Our commitment

We will endeavour to:

- provide a fair and clear procedure for anyone wishing to make a complaint;
- publicise the existence of our Complaints Procedure so that people know how to make a complaint;
- make sure our staff know what to do if a complaint is received;
- make sure complaints are investigated impartially and in a timely manner;
- make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired as required.

## Who can complain?

Anybody who has used a Fife Voluntary Action service or who has engaged with Fife Voluntary Action in any way can use this Policy and Procedure to make a complaint, whether justified or not, about any aspect of our service or conduct.

We would encourage complainants to invoke this Policy and Procedure as soon as they reasonably can after an incident whilst circumstances and details are more likely to be remembered by parties involved. This would aid us in our investigation and ensure a timely and comprehensive response. There is no expiry period for a complaint – we will investigate historical complaints.

Internal complaints or issues should be raised through the Grievance Policy and Procedure.

## Respect and confidentiality

Anybody who complains will be treated with respect and all complaint information will be handled sensitively, with details disclosed only to those who need to know. We will follow any relevant data protection requirements.

FVA reserves the right to make a public statement in response to a complaint, respecting confidentiality at all times.

## Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Fife Voluntary Action's Board of Trustees.

## **Making a Complaint**

Anybody who wishes to make a formal complaint can do so by requesting, or accessing on our website ([www.fivevoluntaryaction.org.uk/complaints](http://www.fivevoluntaryaction.org.uk/complaints)), a copy of the Complaint Form. The form should be completed, signed and posted to our main office, or completed and attached to an e-mail to our CEO.

Only complaints submitted on the appropriate form will be treated as a formal complaint under this policy and procedure.

Any other complaint will be regarded as negative feedback and will be noted. It may not necessarily be investigated and/or responded to. FVA reserves the right to investigate conduct which might be considered grounds for a formal complaint, taking into account any complaints or feedback received, and take whatever action it deems appropriate in the circumstances.

When a completed Complaint Form has been received, the Complaints Resolution Process (detailed below) will then be followed.

## **Complaint Resolution process**

### **Stage One**

Fife Voluntary Action will record all complaints in the Complaints Log held securely and confidentially by the Personal Assistant of the Chief Executive.

If the complaint relates to the Chief Executive, then s/he will automatically invoke Stage Two of this process and pass the complaint on accordingly.

If the complaint has not already been resolved, it will be delegated to a Manager(s) who is considered to be sufficiently objective to investigate it and take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed at the earliest opportunity and given an opportunity to respond to the person appointed to investigate or to the complainant if deemed appropriate.

Fife Voluntary Action will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **one week**. The acknowledgement will state who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of this **Complaints Procedure** should be attached / enclosed.

Those who complain should receive a definitive reply within **20 working days**. If this is not possible for any reason, an example being an investigation having not been fully completed, a brief progress communication should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether or not the complaint is justified, the reply to the complainant will describe the conclusions drawn from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

## Stage Two

If the person who is complaining for any reason feels their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved at **Stage One**, they can request that the complaint be reviewed by Fife Voluntary Action's Board of Trustees – which is Stage Two of this process. Such complaints will be passed to the Chair of the Board.

The request for an appeal (Stage Two) should be acknowledged within **10 working days** of it being received. The acknowledgement will state who has been appointed to investigate the case and when the complainant should expect a reply.

The Chair of the Board may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate to a suitably senior person to do so. This investigation will involve a review of the paperwork and speaking with the person who handled the complaint at **Stage One**.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond only to the investigator.

Those who complain will receive a definitive reply within **20 working days**. If this is for whatever reason not possible, for example if the investigation has not been fully completed, a progress communication should be sent with an indication of when a conclusive reply will be given.

Whether or not the complaint is upheld, the reply to the complainant will describe the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

## Complaints that cannot be investigated

We will not be able to follow the above process for any complaint which has been submitted:

- anonymously;
- directly to Board Member/s (i.e. not in line with the process outlined in this document);
- which is based on previous complaints that have not been upheld and are not substantively different to the previous complaint;
- where legal action is intimated;
- which is about matters that do not directly relate to the products, services or people of Fife Voluntary Action.

## Other Options

As a registered Company we are accountable to Companies House and as a Registered Charity we are accountable to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Some complaints, depending on their nature, can be submitted to appropriate regulators. For information about the type of complaints OSCR can be involved in please see their website:

[www.oscr.org.uk/managing-your-charity/how-to-complain-about-a-charity/making-a-complaint](http://www.oscr.org.uk/managing-your-charity/how-to-complain-about-a-charity/making-a-complaint)

Fife Voluntary Action is a member of, and funded indirectly through, Fife's Community Planning Partnership. Complaints may be submitted to the Partnership Manager at Fife Council by contacting 03451 555 555 or through [www.fifedirect.org.uk/communityplanning](http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/communityplanning)