

Connected Voice

Complaints Policy

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Additional documents Informal complaints form
 Formal complaints form

Document details and review

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1. Introduction

Connected Voice aims to provide its members, organisations and individuals with the best possible service. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be occasions when users of our services feel that the quality or level of service provided falls short of what they could reasonably expect. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that any organisation or an individual who uses Connected Voice services has the right to make a complaint, and that the complaint is investigated and responded to within a realistic period of time.

Connected Voice encourages individuals to comment, make compliments or to complain about the service they receive, so that improvements can be made. Connected Voice will not victimise anyone for making a complaint or comment.

The Connected Voice Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy will be included in the Induction programme.

2. Connected Voice independence

Connected Voice receives funding from public sector organisations, charitable foundations and trusts and others to support people, organisations and communities; run projects, provide services, support forums and engagement activities, carry out research and contribute towards the general running costs. It also raises funds through trading and providing services. As a long-established charity, Connected Voice will maintain its independence and will ensure that any decisions about the employment of staff and the work of the organisation complies with the aims, objectives, mission and values of the organisation. Connected Voice will not be influenced in its decision making by funders' interventions. Strategic direction and overall policy is agreed by our Board of Trustees, who are openly elected from the membership and have fixed terms of office.

3. Confidentiality

Connected Voice will investigate complaints in line with the Connected Voice Confidentiality Policy.

4. Informal complaints

- ✓ It is always better to resolve problems quickly and as near to the source of the problem as possible. So it is helpful to discuss the complaint fully with the person concerned, or with their manager. In most cases this should be sufficient to sort the matter out.
- ✓ The person responding to the complaint should offer the complainant the chance to discuss the issue privately, and hopefully it will be resolved at this stage.

- ✓ The Connected Voice staff member should record that an informal complaint has been made using the Informal Complaints Form, which will note the outcome
- ✓ If the complainant needs additional support to make comments and participate fully in the process, then the Connected Voice staff will source that support

5. Formal complaints

- ✓ If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal complaint process, or if the complaint can't be dealt with on an informal basis, the complainant should make a complaint, by telephone or in writing, to the Chief Executive
- ✓ The Chief Executive will acknowledge in writing, within five working days the receipt of any complaint
- ✓ The Chief Executive will undertake to investigate the circumstances leading to the complaint
- ✓ If the complainant needs additional support to make comments and participate fully in the process, then the Chief Executive will source that support
- ✓ The complainant will be kept informed at each part of the process, of the progress of the investigation
- ✓ The Chief Executive will record that a formal complaint has been made using the Formal Complaint Form, which will note the outcome
- ✓ The Chief Executive will communicate the results of the investigation to the complainant within a reasonable time - normally 21 days. A more complex investigation might require more time. If the complaint is found to be justified, the Chief Executive will agree any necessary further action with the complainant
- ✓ The Chief Executive will inform the Trustees (Connected Voice Board) about any complaints and any actions taken
- ✓ If a complaint against any Connected Voice staff member is upheld, it may invoke the disciplinary procedure; this is an internal Connected Voice process

The Charity Commission expects charities to notify it in the event of a serious incident, which is about safeguarding, financial mismanagement or fraud, and terrorism. In the event of a complaint that alleges a serious incident, the Trustees will inform the Charity Commission.

Service users have a right to access the Complaints Service of the relevant Commissioners. Connected Voice can be contacted for contact details.

6. Appeals process

- ✓ If dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, the complainant has the right to put their case to a sub group of the Connected Voice Trustees. The complainant has 28 days from the date they were informed of the outcome of the initial investigation, if they wish to appeal. If they wish to do this, there will be a special meeting of at least three Trustees chaired by either the Chair or

one of the Vice Chairs. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend if they wish.

- ✓ The Trustees will try to arrange the appeal hearing within 28 days of receiving the request; however, in more complex cases, additional and external information might be sought, which might take more than 28 days. The complainant will be kept informed of this.
- ✓ If the complaint is found to be justified, Connected Voice will agree any necessary further action with the complainant. If the trustees do not consider the complaint justified, they will provide the complainant with their reasons for this.
- ✓ The Trustees' decision is final and the complainant will be informed of the Trustees' decision in writing. Other format could be used for complainants with communication needs.

7. Complaint about the Chief Executive or Trustee

- ✓ If the complaint is about the Chief Executive or a Trustee, the complaint should be sent to Chair of Connected Voice Board via the office, and marked private and confidential.

8. Connected Voice Advocacy

Connected Voice Advocacy service users have a right to access the Complaints Service of the relevant Commissioners. Service users can contact Connected Voice for contact details.

The Connected Voice Advocacy Complaints process is:

- ✓ When a complaint is received, any one of the available Connected Voice Advocacy staff will listen to what is said and will take notes of the facts. Advocacy staff will inform the person making the complaint what will happen next.
- ✓ Connected Voice Advocacy will make it clear that this will be treated as an informal complaint and be initially investigated by Connected Voice Advocacy. At any stage, should the complainant want to make a formal complaint, they are at liberty to do so and would then need to contact the Connected Voice Chief Executive.
- ✓ All information is written up, and responsibility for ensuring it is pursued passes to the Connected Voice Advocacy Manager.
- ✓ The Connected Voice Advocacy Manager will decide on the most appropriate way of dealing with the complaint, in consultation with the staff member's line manager.
- ✓ The manager will communicate the results of the informal investigation to the complainant within a reasonable time – normally 21 days. If the complaint is found to be justified, Connected Voice Advocacy will agree any necessary further action with the complainant.
- ✓ If at this stage, the complainant is still not satisfied, they can pursue the matter to a formal complaint.
- ✓ The record of complaint and how this was resolved will be held in the Connected Voice Advocacy Compliments and Complaints file. This file will be kept in a confidential ICT folder and reviewed annually.

- ✓ If the complaint concerns a service funded by a public sector organisation, the complainant also has the option to complain directly to the commissioner.

9. Making a complaint about another organisation or an employee of another organisation

- ✓ All complaints instigated against another organisation or an employee of another organisation should be discussed with a Line Manager or Chief Executive before any action is taken.
- ✓ Employees should not make comments or complaints about another organisation or an employee of another organisation through social media, email, telephone call or any other correspondence.
- ✓ The Line Manager and Chief Executive will discuss and consider any complaint about another organisation or employee of another organisation before taking any action.
- ✓ The Line Manager and Chief Executive will take the appropriate action following an investigation of the complaint.

10. Anonymous Complaints

Connected Voice will investigate anonymous complaints and deal with them as appropriate.

11. Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Connected Voice will deal with any reports of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in line with the Connected Voice Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy.

12. Safeguarding issues

If a complaint is made which involves a Safeguarding issue, then the Connected Voice Safeguarding Policy takes precedence. This includes notification to the Charity Commission of a serious incident.

13. Comments and compliments

- ✓ Whenever a compliment is made, the information should be fed back to the staff concerned and their manager.
- ✓ The positive behaviours raised in the compliment should be looked at to see if they can be replicated elsewhere to improve best practice
- ✓ The compliment should be recorded and used as part of the internal quality process.

14. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The Connected Voice Complaints, compliments and comments policy will be administered in line with the Connected Voice Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Confidential

Connected Voice Informal complaint form

Name of complainant:

Date of complaint:

Address:

Telephone no:

Email:

Nature of complaint (to include how the complaint was made and to whom):

Agreed action

Outcome

Signature of complainant:

Signature of Connected Voice staff member dealing with complaint:

Date completed:

Confidential

Connected Voice Formal complaint form

Name of complainant:

Date of complaint:

Address:

Telephone no:

Email:

Nature of complaint (to include how the complaint was made and to whom):

Investigation undertaken:

Agreed action

Outcome

Signature of Chief Executive:

Date: