

# Complaints Policy

## 1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy sets out how we will respond to complaints from customers/people who use the services of Voluntary Action Coventry (VAC).
- 1.2 VAC is committed to providing excellent customer service. Complaints can be a valuable source of information and VAC is committed to continuous improvement of its services.

## 2. Definition of Customer

- 2.1 For the purposes of this procedure, customers are defined as anyone who has any dealing with the organisation through any of the projects or services VAC provides to members of the public or to the organisations which are members of VAC.
- 2.2 VAC staff are asked to raise any issues either with their line manager or under the internal grievance procedure. Trustees are also excluded from this procedure; any specific issues should be raised with the Chair.
- 2.3 Information about how to raise a complaint will be accessible and available via the VAC and Healthwatch Coventry websites and by paper copy from the VAC office
- 2.4 The complaints policy will also be highlighted to and accessible by members of VAC.
- 2.5 Where possible all requests for the policy in accessible formats will be met.

## 3. The process

- 3.1 All complaints will be dealt with confidentially within VAC.

### 3.2 Raise a concern or problem informally

Customers can choose to discuss their concern or issue with the team providing the service to see if this can be resolved or if you just want to bring it to our attention.

### 3.3 Making a formal complaint

To make a complaint, customers should put their complaint in writing to the Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Coventry:

Chief Executive  
Voluntary Action Coventry  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Harp Place  
2 Sandy Lane  
Coventr CV1 1FJ

Or by email to [s.ogle@vaccoventry.org.uk](mailto:s.ogle@vaccoventry.org.uk)

If the complaint concerns the Chief Executive, then correspondence should be addressed to the chair of VAC at the above address.

All correspondence should be marked 'Private and Confidential'.

Complainants should include the following information:

- Your name and contact address and email or phone number
- Who or what has caused your concerns
- When and where this happened
- What results you would like to have from your complaint

### **3.4 Help making a complaint**

If writing with a complaint presents a problem, please contact VAC's Office & Personnel Manager (email [b.virk@vacoventry.org.uk](mailto:b.virk@vacoventry.org.uk)) and we will arrange for your complaint to be recorded and confirmed with you.

### **3.5 How long after something happened can you complain**

VAC will accept complaints up to 6 months from the date of the incident.

## **4. Response**

4.1 Voluntary Action Coventry will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 7 working days

4.2 An investigation will be carried out and a response will usually be given to the complainant within 30 working days. If the complaint is complex meaning a response cannot be made in within 30 working days VAC will let the complainant know what time frame will be possible and keep them updated.

4.3 If the complaint concerns a member of staff they will be informed that a complaint has been made about them.

4.4 During the process of dealing with a complaint we will be as open and transparent as possible. People raising complaints will be given full information about the progress of their complaint except in the cases mentioned below:

- If the complaint involves questions about the actions or competencies of individual members of staff or trustees, other processes may subsume the complaints procedure and VAC may not be able to provide the person raising the complaint with all the relevant information. (For instance, employment legislation may prevent publication of the results of disciplinary processes)
- The legal requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowers) may restrict the information that can be provided to persons raising complaints.

If either of these situations occurs the Chief Executive will provide an explanation without disclosing any restricted information.

4.5 To ensure confidentiality, information about the progress of a complaint will only be provided to the person making the complaint.

4.6 A response will be provided in writing

## **5.0 Record keeping**

- 5.1 Logs of complaints received and response made will be kept
- 5.2 All correspondence will be kept on file for a minimum of 3 years
- 6.0 If legal or disciplinary proceedings need to be undertaken the terms and conditions of this policy may be revoked.