



## Complaint Procedure for Learners and their Representatives

### 1.0 Dealing with complaints

- 1.1. Learners and their representatives are assured that concerns and complaints will be dealt with quickly and sympathetically.
- 1.2. Condover College Ltd (CCL) welcomes comments and complaints when the level of the service that is delivered does not meet the needs of the learners, their relatives/ supporters or where other concerns and complaints have been identified.
- 1.3. The staff Induction Training Programme will include training in the complaints system used and the Duty of Candour.
- 1.4. On-going staff training will be aimed at using the Complaints Procedure as a positive tool for identifying opportunities for improvement.
- 1.5. Complaints will not be seen as criticism, either on a personal level or criticism of CCL in general.
- 1.6. What may appear trivial to one person may be seen as a major issue for another.
- 1.7. Staff should not use the complaints system as a means of raising an issue or as a means of making a complaint. They should instead use either the Grievance or Disclosure Policy and procedure.
- 1.8. Learners will be supplied with a copy of the complaints procedure in a format suitable to their needs.
- 1.9. In order that learners understand that they have a right to complain, staff will make every attempt to explain how the learner should go about it.
- 1.10. The procedure that learners need to follow and reasons why they might want to complain will be discussed during each house meeting in a way that can be understood.
- 1.11. Where learners are unable to communicate their feelings through speech, alternative means of communication, signs, pictures etc will be used.
- 1.12. CCL promotes and encourages the use of independent and group advocacy.

## 2.0 Policy Statement

- 2.1. We recognise that there is a fine divide between being 'dissatisfied with a service' and a 'complaint'. Learners and their relatives do not need to make a 'formal complaint' for their dissatisfaction to be acted upon.
- 2.2. All complaints will be acted upon quickly and effectively in a way, which is non-discriminatory to the complainant.
- 2.3. Any person wishing to complain does not need to provide their personal details on the complaints form, although it may restrict any investigation if the identity of the complainant is not known.
- 2.4. We recognise that complaints are not personal criticism and will ensure that complaints are seen as an opportunity to improve the level and standard of service provided.
- 2.5. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints 'in house' but recognise that this may not always be possible. Where a solution cannot be agreed we will ensure that the matter is referred to an independent person for their views.
- 2.6. It will often help if complaints are written down, CCL has forms especially for this purpose, although complaints will be dealt with just as speedily when not using the form or without a name attached.
- 2.7. Complainants do not have to write anything down, complaints may be made by telephone, in person, in writing or by email see Appendix 1 for contact details
- 2.8. Anonymous complaints will be investigated following the same procedure as when the complainant is known.
- 2.9. CCL will supply, on request, a written copy of this complaints procedure to any learner, anyone acting on behalf of a learner with their permission or any other person.
- 2.10. We fully support our learners' right to refer any complaint, at any stage, to the Care Quality Commission or Local Government Ombudsman (see Appendix 1 for contact details).
- 2.11. A complaint must be made no later than 12 weeks after:
  - The date the event occurred or, if later,
  - The date the event came to the notice of the complainant

The time limit will not apply if Condoover College is satisfied that:

  - The complainant can give a good reason for not making the complaint within that time limit, and
  - Despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly

### 3.0 Procedure

- 3.1. The Director of Education & Director of Care & Support is responsible for ensuring that each learner, their supporters and stakeholders are aware that CCL has a complaints procedure.

This will be achieved by:

- Inclusion in the Learners' Guide of the Complaints Procedure and Complaints Information Notes.
  - Notices boards around at the college and residential areas.
  - Inclusion of complaint analysis in newsletters, meetings and reports.
  - Ensuring that prospective learners are provided with a copy of the Complaints Procedure.
  - Making the Complaint Procedure available to stakeholders and other professionals on request.
- 3.2. The style, content and format of the complaints information will be such that it is easily understood by learners and appropriate to their needs
- 3.3. Where additional assistance is required to understand the complaints procedure this will be provided or advice on where they may obtain this given.
- 3.4. On occasions where an 'informal complaint' is received, the Chief Executive will designate a member of staff to deal with the complaint ("Investigating Officer").
- 3.5. The Investigating Officer will ensure that a record is made in the duty book and steps are taken to try to resolve the issues raised.
- 3.6. The Investigating Officer will seek to resolve informal complaints in a timely and effective manner. Where this does not happen to the satisfaction of the complainant, they should be offered the opportunity to elevate the informal complaint to become a 'Formal Complaint'.

### 4.0 Formal complaints

- 4.1. Formal complainants do not have to be in writing, complaints may be made by telephone, in person, in writing or by email to the Director of Education or Director of Care & Support in which the complainant should state that they wish to make a complaint.
- 4.2. We will accept complaints from representatives on behalf of the learners'.
- 4.3. Where a formal complaint or an informal complaint has been elevated to become a formal complaint, the Director of Education or Director of Care & Support will:
- Make an opening entry in the Complaints Register
  - Where the complaint has been made in writing, write to the complainant within 3 working days to acknowledge the complaint.
  - Where the complaint was been made in person or by telephone, provide a written copy of the complaint within three working days.
  - Inform them who the investigating officer will be (this will be a person with sufficient seniority to resolve the issue).
  - Provide an estimation of how long the investigation is likely to take.

- Inform the complainant that they may refer the matter to CQC or Shropshire Adult Safeguarding Team or the Local Government Ombudsman at any time.
- 4.4. The complaints process is confidential and the name of any complainant will not be readily identifiable from general entries in the registers and logs or from the covers of files and folders.
- 4.5. Each complaint will be assigned a unique reference number using the information entered into the Incident Log Register. This reference number will be used on all documentation relating to the complaint, complainant and investigation.
- 4.1 Each Complaint Folder will only show the following detail on its outer cover:
- Unique Reference Number (from the Incident Log Register)
  - The person responsible for investigating the complaint (“The Investigating Officer”).
- 4.6. The Director of Education or Director of Care & Support is responsible for the thorough investigation of all complaints and responsibility for ensuring that investigations undertaken by others are in line with the best practice standards required.
- 4.7. Wherever possible the investigation will be completed within 28 days of receiving a formal complaint. If the investigation is to exceed this period, the manager will write to the complainant with a revised conclusion date.
- 4.8. We aim to have all complaint investigations concluded within six months unless a different deadline is agreed with the complaint and there is a good reason for this.
- 4.9. The Investigating Officer will keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation
- 4.10. Following the completion of the investigation, the manager will provide the complainant with a written ‘Complaint Investigation Report’. This document should identify:
- The nature of the complaint
  - The actions taken to investigate the complaint
  - The people involved in the investigation
  - The findings of the investigation
  - Conclusion
  - Action plan
  - The appeal process if not satisfied with the outcome
  - The right to take the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman
- 4.11. The Chief Executive may decide to hold meeting with the complainant to discuss the findings and conclusions in order to determine what may be the best action plan for the future. A record of this meeting should be made and included in the Complaint Folder.

## **5.0 Summary of complaints.**

- 5.1. The Director of Education or Director of Care & Support is responsible for ensuring that complete and comprehensive records of all complaints are kept.

- 5.2. We are required to make available to the CQC a summary of all complaints arising since the previous inspection visit. The presentation and content of this summary will be decided by the Director of Care & Support and agreed with CQC.

## **6.0 Comments and Complaints Procedure**

- 6.1. CCL aims to provide a high quality service. We know however that everything won't always be right and feel that being open to comments by learners' will help us to improve our services.
- 6.2. We want you to tell us about anything you are not satisfied with. These may include situations where you feel our service has not been good enough or where we have not responded to you quickly enough or well enough. It may include things about the accommodation as well as about the service we provide.
- 6.3. We aim to respond to all complaints within 28 days. Normally it will be much sooner than this, but some problems take a little more time.
- 6.4. We will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 3 working days.
- 6.5. We will then arrange to meet with you to discuss your complaint and what we may be able to do within 10 working days.
- 6.6. If you or your family makes a complaint about anything you will not be treated any differently because of it. If you feel that someone is victimising you because you have made a complaint you should tell someone whom you feel comfortable talking to about it.
- 6.7. When a complaint has been received and it is deemed significant (substantial) the funding authority will be notified. Dependent on the complaint CQC or Ofsted may also need to be informed in line with legislation.

## **7.0 How to make a complaint.**

### **7.1. Discussion**

- 7.1.1. Many concerns can be sorted out before they become real problems. If you want to talk about something that is worrying you, you can do this with any member of staff.
- 7.1.2. This may be about members of staff, other learners, visitors to the organisation or practise

### **7.2. Stage One**

- 7.2.1. You should make your complaint to the Manager/ Director of Care and Support/ Director of Education; it would help if you can put it in writing, however, we are happy for you to tell us about it. If you are not sure how to make a complaint it may help to talk to someone. This could be a member of your family, a friend, a member of staff or your advocate.

7.3. Stage Two

- 7.3.1. If you are not happy with the response you receive from the Manager / Director of Care and Support / Director of Education or the complaint involves them, you should then make the complaint to the Director of Finance.

7.4. Stage Three

- 7.4.1. If you are still not satisfied with the response you receive from the Director of Finance or the complaint involves them, you should then take the complaint to the Chief Executive.

7.5. Stage Four

- 7.5.1. If you are still not satisfied with the response from the Chief Executive or the complaint receives them you may ask for the matter to be considered by the Board of Management by writing in confidence to the Chairman (Patrick Moore).

7.6. Stage Five

- 7.6.1. You have the right to refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or Local Authority at any stage if you so wish.
- 7.6.2. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive you from the investigating officer you may contact the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 7.6.3. For contact detail see Appendix 1 for address and telephone number

This policy must be read in conjunction with other policies and does not form part of the employee's contract.

This procedure can be made available on request in other languages and in other formats such as cassette and Braille

## Appendix 1

Contact details for complainants to use with this procedure

Condover College  
Longbow House  
Harlescott Lane  
Shrewsbury  
Shropshire  
SY1 3GZ

Telephone number: 01743 872250  
Email: [enquires@condovercl.org.uk](mailto:enquires@condovercl.org.uk)

Care Quality Commission (CQC) National Correspondence  
Citygate  
Gallowgate  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 4PA

Telephone number: 03000 616161  
Website: [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

The Local Government Ombudsman

Telephone number: 0300 061 0614  
Email: [advice@lgo.org.uk](mailto:advice@lgo.org.uk)  
Website [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

Chair of the Board of Management

Patrick Moore  
Email: [Patrick.Moore@condovercollege.ac.uk](mailto:Patrick.Moore@condovercollege.ac.uk)