
Complaint Policy

Newcastle Community Centre

Approval date: 1/5/2019

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Revised 4/1/2023
Next revision date 1/1/2026

1.Responsibility for approval of policy	<i>Board</i>
2.Responsibility for implementation	<i>Chairperson</i>
3.Responsibility for ensuring review	<i>Policy Committee</i>

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Newcastle Community Centre is committed to taking seriously any complaint that concerned individuals have about the Centre. The Board of the Centre believes that if an individual wishes to make a complaint or register a concern, they should find it easy to do so.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments are taken seriously and addressed in a professional manner.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy covers all actions to be taken in respect of a complaint by a concerned individual. Concerned individuals can include: board members, volunteers, Community Scheme Employees, users of the Centre and members of the local community and concerned stakeholders (funders, external agencies, etc).
- 3.2. Complaints can be made against any aspect of Newcastle Community Centre.
- 3.3. While all complaints need to be addressed, this policy is mainly concerned with complaints for which the involvement of the Board would be necessary.

4. Principles

- 4.1. It is Newcastle Community Centre's policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services.
- 4.2. All complaints will be responded to and then resolved promptly and within timescales outlined.
- 4.3. Newcastle Community Centre supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted out at a local level between just the complainant and the organisation.
- 4.4. Complainants should be consulted about what they would like to happen about their complaint.
- 4.5. All persons involved should be supported and given appropriate assistance throughout the process.
- 4.6. The Complaints process should be well publicised. Board members, volunteers, Community Scheme Employees, users of the Centre and members of the community should be made aware that there is an easy way to complain and how to do so.
- 4.7. All complaints must be properly recorded in a consistent manner.
- 4.8. Outcome of complaints should be monitored for quality.
- 4.9. All complaints will be treated in confidence.
- 4.10. Newcastle Community Centre will not entertain what they consider vexatious and malicious complaints.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1. Newcastle Community Centre board are responsible for ensuring all complaints are dealt with properly.
- 5.2. The Secretary is the Designated Investigator of complaints.
- 5.3. Complaints will be referred to the Chairperson, if the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.
- 5.4. A concerned individual can complain about any aspect of the service that has impacted upon them or the organisation they represent in a way that they perceive to be negative.

6. Complaints Procedures

- 6.1. Verbal Complaints:
 - 6.1.1. All verbal complaints will be taken seriously.
 - 6.1.2. All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous and sympathetic.
 - 6.1.3. Volunteers will be contacted to respond to any oral complaints. If the suggested response is not acceptable to the complainant, then the secretary should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing and give them a copy of the complaints policy and form for completion.
 - 6.1.4. All complaints should be recorded noting: date, time, name of person making the complaint, nature of the complaint, and the name of the Board members handling the complaint. Contact details of the complainant should also be recorded.
- 6.2. Written Complaints:
 - 6.2.1. A completed copy of the Complaints Record Form or a Complaint Letter should be given to the Chairperson. This should include information on the following: the date, time, and name and contact details of the person making the complaint
 - 6.2.1.1. The nature of the complaint.
 - 6.2.1.2. What the complainant's desired outcome would be.
 - 6.2.1.3. The name of the nominated person handling the complaint.
 - 6.2.2. If the complaint has been received by letter or email, the secretary should contact the complainant in writing within five working days to acknowledge receipt of the letter. The secretary may be required to ask additional questions to ensure the information outlined in the Complaints Recording Form is available. The letter should be attached to a copy of the form.
 - 6.2.3. The secretary should inform the complainant that the complaint has been lodged and the matter will be investigated and a reply given in ten working days.
 - 6.2.4. The secretary will proceed to investigate the complaint. If necessary, further details should be requested from the complainant.
 - 6.2.5. The secretary will complete the investigation within ten working days (unless otherwise agreed) and the complainant will be informed in writing.
 - 6.2.6. If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a legal advisor to the centre. If legal action is taken at this stage, any investigation by NCC should cease immediately.
 - 6.2.7. If the Complaint involves a Board member, then the process should be passed to the Chairperson.

7. Outcomes and Actions

- 7.1. Outcomes and actions initiated, as a result of the complaint, should be recorded on the Complaints Recording Form.
- 7.2. If the complainant is found to be rightly aggrieved, an apology should be offered by the organisation in writing, signed by Chairperson, and all steps should be taken to ensure the cause is appropriately addressed.
- 7.3. If the complainant's proposed outcome is not judged satisfactory by the organisation, the complainant will be provided with a written rationale for the decision.
- 7.4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation they have a right to appeal, though this should be done within ten working days from receipt of official correspondence.
- 7.5. The secretary must then contact the chairperson of the Board to instigate the establishment of an appeal committee and process.
- 7.6. The appeal should involve two members of the Board who have not been involved in the process.
- 7.7. The decision of the board is final

8. Anonymous Complaints.

- 8.1. Anonymous complaints or complaints made under false names raise both practical problems and issues concerning fairness. The reason for this is that an investigation cannot be undertaken.
- 8.2. In the event that an anonymous complaint is received, Newcastle Community Centre will note the issues raised and, where necessary, try and resolve them appropriately.
- 8.3. An anonymous complaint may be referred for investigation.
- 8.4. Any complaint involving a minor will be investigated and handled in a confidential manner according to the Child Protection Policy.
- 8.5. If the complaint relates to the general service delivery, this will be referred to the Chairperson and/or the Board and remedial action will be implemented, if appropriate.
- 8.6. A record of all complaints will be kept in the complaints file.
- 8.7. If anonymous complaints are received, as far as possible, the Board will promote the complaints procedure and ensure appropriate supports are in place to facilitate complaints being made.
- 8.8. A register of complaints will be kept.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed in three years or sooner if circumstances changed.

Signed:
Chairperson

Signed
Secretary

Date

Date

Signed version of policy kept in NCC Centre

Complaints Record form

Date of complaint: _____
Complaint made by: _____
Complaint received by: _____
Complaint made by: Telephone _____
Letter (attached) _____
In person _____
Other _____

▪ All complaints are treated confidentially.

Complainant details

Name of complainant(s): _____
Address of complainant/s: _____

Contact phone number of complainant/s: _____

If a complaint is being made on behalf of someone else:

1. Who is the complaint on behalf of: _____
2. Who is making the complaint: _____
3. What is their relationship: _____
4. Does the representative have the complainant's written consent to represent their interests?
Yes _____
No _____

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The complainant's desired outcome would be:

Signed

Complainant: _____ Date: _____

Board Member: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your comments. Complaints are valuable in helping to maintain and improve the service.

How is the complaint being dealt with? (To be completed by the Chairperson and/or Secretary of the Board)

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Actions and outcomes (to be reported by the Chairperson and/or Secretary of the Board)
