


Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy		
Issue Date	15th July 2021	
Reviewed Date	May 23	
Next Review Due	May 25	

Policy Statement

Gloucestershire Nightstop understands the importance of the experiences of Young People who use the service, Hosts, Providers, Volunteers and relevant Stakeholders in improving and developing the service offered to the community. As such Gloucestershire Nightstop encourages all forms of feedback including Comments, Compliments and Complaints, where a resolution has not been reached informally.

Comments and Compliments

A comment is any feedback that isn't complimentary but does not need to be investigated as a formal complaint.

Any comments and compliments regarding the staff and service can be made in a variety of formats to suit the individual's needs.

In writing to;

Admin

Gloucestershire Nightstop

13 Ladybellegate Street,

Gloucester,

GL1 2HN

Email; admin@glosns.uk

By Phone; 01452 331330 to any member of staff.

In person during your interactions with staff members.

When a formal comment or compliment is received it will be acknowledged.

Complaints

Complaints are accepted about the service received or not received, any aspect of Gloucestershire Nightstop Policy or Practices. Issues raised about Staff conduct will be dealt with under the disciplinary policy. Issues that relate to the welfare of a child or vulnerable person will be dealt with under the Safeguarding Policy. Where there is a police investigation, we will suspend any investigations into the complaint and support the police investigation. If the complainant is seeking legal redress, we will suspend our complaints procedure.

Complaints should be made as soon as possible following an incident or situation that occurred however Gloucestershire Nightstop will accept complaints regarding incidents up to 12 months since the original date of the incident as Gloucestershire Nightstop recognises that some people who use our service may need support to deal with a situation that has occurred.

Gloucestershire Nightstop will not treat anyone unfavourably because they have made a complaint. Young People have the right to decide the content of the complaint and to decide how far they wish to proceed with the complaint.

Support will be offered to Young People who wish to make a complaint or are supported to access a third party to support them where support within the team is not appropriate due to the nature of the complaint.

All complaints will be treated with confidentiality and information shared on a need-to-know basis.

Informal

Wherever possible any complaint should be made informally with the aim to resolve it. This can be made verbally with a staff member in person or on the phone, or by email by anyone including young people,

anyone supporting or advocating on behalf of a young person, hosts, providers, volunteers, partner agencies and stakeholders. If the complaint is made verbally a member of staff will record it in writing and check with the complainant that the written record is accurate.

Gloucestershire Nightstop staff will try to resolve any concerns or issues raised informally at the time of them being raised. We will take into account any circumstances and needs of those raising the complaint and ensure support is provided to ensure complaints are understood including offering support from a member of the team or informing young people of their right to an advocate who can support them. An advocate can be a support worker, a professional involved in their support already, a family member or friend, or a new professional.

The outcome of the complaint will be made within 2 weeks of the date of the original complaint and a written letter will be issued detailing the outcome.

Any changes or agreements made as part of the outcome should be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

Formal Stage 1

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at the informal stage, The complaint can be made formal in writing to the Executive Director within 28 days of the date of the outcome letter issued at the informal stage. This initiates a formal investigation carried out by the Executive Director.

The Executive Director will;

- Review the original complaint and outcome letter.
- Speak with the complainant.
- Interview the staff involved, any witnesses, and anyone involved in or relevant to the situation.
- Where the complainant is under 18 years old, Inform the local authority of the complaint.
- All those interviewed will check copies of notes from their interviews for accuracy before an outcome is advised.
- Decide on the outcome of the investigation with a balanced view of all the information made available and presented throughout the investigation.
- Inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation and any measures or changes to be made if relevant.
- Write to the complainant, and their advocate, detailing the outcome of the investigation. A copy of the outcome letter will also be sent to staff named within the complaint.
- Inform the complainant of their right to progress to Formal Stage 2 if dissatisfied and what that process entails.

The Executive Director will not;

- Share the notes of the interviews with the complainant or anyone involved in the complaint.
- Allow anyone to be treated any differently because of making a complaint.

Formal Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Executive Director at Formal Stage 1, they may escalate their complaint to Formal Stage 2 to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. This needs to be done, in writing, within 28 days of the outcome letter from Formal Stage 1.

The Chair of the Board of Trustee's, in consultation with the board of trustees, will decide if an independent person is required for an independent review. The board will consider the nature of the complaint.

The Chair of the Board will;

- Review the written records and outcomes of the complaint from Informal and Formal Stage 1.
- Speak with the complainant.
- Review the interviews from Formal Stage 1, If necessary, reinterview for clarity purposes or interview anyone who may have relevant information but hadn't been interviewed at formal stage 1.
- Prepare a report based on the findings.
- Present report to the Board of Trustee's (And an independent person where applicable)
- Inform the complainant of the decision of the Board of Trustee's

The Board of Trustee's (And Independent Person where applicable) will;

- Consider the information presented by the Chair.
- Make a decision on the outcome of the complaint within 24 hours.

- Send a letter to the complainant informing them of the decision within 28 days of the meeting.

The decision of the Board of Trustees is final and this policy allows for no further action. If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome the Charity Commission is the ombudsman for charities and would be the next steps for anyone unhappy with the final decision. Details of the Charity Commission can be found on the gov.uk website.

Approach to dealing with complaints

The way Gloucestershire Nightstop approaches and responds to complaints is important to maintain trust of all those involved with Gloucestershire Nightstop. There are 8 areas to consider.

1. Timeliness

- Gloucestershire Nightstop has a set response time at each stage; however complaints need to be prioritised and a response given or action taken as quickly as possible whilst managing the needs of the service and referrals coming in.
- In some cases, we will need to take our time, if anger and strong emotions are present it can often be helpful to allow some time to cool down so that questions can be posed and answered in a calm constructive way.

2. Listening, Clarifying and Recording

- Using active listening skills to ensure the whole story and situation is heard. Not every situation is easily explained as to why feelings have been hurt or someone angered.
- Giving people time to reflect in their own words, not summarised into your own words.
- We will clarify information given by asking more questions. This should not be to question the story but to ensure the story is understood. Once a record has been made, the complainant should review it for accuracy.
- The complainant should be asked how they would like the situation to be resolved and what their expectations are.
- The complaints policy should be explained so they know what the process is.
- Reassure the complainant their complaint is being taken seriously.

3. Assessing the situation

- If the situation is about a criminal act, a safeguarding issue or staff discipline, this is not a complaint dealt with under this policy and another procedure will need to be implemented.
- If the complaint is about you specifically, then perhaps a colleague may be more appropriate to deal with it. Speak with the Executive Director to allocate the handling of the complaint.
- What information is required, and are there any facts in dispute? Who was witness or has information relevant? The informal stage is not a formal investigation, you are assessing the information and attempting to resolve the situation. Formal interviews and minutes are not required at the informal stage.

4. Support Needs

- Does the complainant have any support needs that need to be considered? What support can Gloucestershire Nightstop offer or do we need to approach partner agencies for advocates, translators, or other forms of support.
- Does the member of staff need any additional support or resources to support them to complete the resolution to the complaint?

5. Attempting Resolution

- A resolution at the informal stage is the priority. Formal complaints cause stress for all involved.
- Consider what the complainant has suggested for how to resolve the complaint. Take a problem-solving approach with an open mind of how this can be delivered.
- Do not commit to anything straight away, take time to consider the resolution, but give the complainant a timescale of when you will get back to them.

6. Reaching a Resolution

- Own any mistakes and apologise for them.
- Only apologise if Gloucestershire Nightstop is at fault, but do recognise any distress the complainant is feeling.
- Put the resolution in writing and both sign it. Detailing any steps that are to be carried out and by who.
- Ensure the complainant feels positive about complaining and that they did the right thing.
- Where possible, try to ensure we can still all work together.

7. Follow Up

- Allow the person time to decide if they are happy with the resolution. If they are not happy, they can move to formal complaint stage within 28 days of your letter with the resolution on.
- Ensure all colleagues are aware of any procedure changes or service changes and are implementing them.

8. **Learning**

- Ensure that all learning from the complaint is shared across the team.
- Staff involved in the complaint should be debriefed once resolved
- All complaints should be reviewed by the Executive Director as part of the service reviews.