

# Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure including Duty of Candour

## Introduction

The Isle of Wight Youth Trust (IWYT) is committed to providing outstanding service in an open and transparent manner. However, we understand there may be times when service users, referrers or other members of the public may be unhappy and wish their view to be known.

IWYT actively encourages constructive comments, compliments and complaints. This policy sets out how IWYT manages Comments, Compliments and Complaints.

There are three main ways in which a service user/referrer can make a comment or complaint:

1. Via the feedback forms that are given to all clients following the cessation of the counselling sessions. This is an anonymous way to make a comment or complaint or the client can identify themselves if they wish.
2. Via the 'Suggestion Box' and the 'Suggestion Slips' provided in the waiting room at the IWYT. Again, this can be an anonymous way to make a comment or complaint, or clients can make themselves known if they wish.
3. Via the Operations Team, the Counsellor or the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). It is helpful to have comments/complaints in writing, but verbal communication may be preferred by the user, their representative or referrer. All "verbal" complaints of a serious nature, or those which cannot be resolved, will need to be put in writing and signed by the complainant.

## Comments and compliments

Please email Executive Assistant to SLT - [kate.whiting@iowyouthtrust.co.uk](mailto:kate.whiting@iowyouthtrust.co.uk) who will ensure that compliments are passed to the relevant staff member concerned. Their manager and trustees will also be informed.

Comments that could result in service improvement will be passed to the relevant member of the senior management team to review and implement where possible.

The person making the comment will be informed of any changes made as a result of their comment.

## Informal Complaint

Firstly, if a service user, referrer or other members of the public is not satisfied with any aspect of IWYT they may raise this with the appropriate member of staff or manager. Informal complaints can be made via telephone, email, in person or in writing. Any complainant who brings an initial informal complaint will still be able to make a formal complaint if they are not satisfied with the response they have received.

Informal complaints will be recorded as feedback and include details of any action taken using the Form in *Appendix 1*.

## Formal Complaint Stage 1

Complaints should be made in writing via email or letter, giving as much information as possible. Support can be provided by IWYT if assistance is needed with this.

Complaints should be addressed to:

Email: [kate.whiting@iowyouthtrust.co.uk](mailto:kate.whiting@iowyouthtrust.co.uk)

Post: c/o CEO, Isle of Wight Youth Trust, 114 Pyle Street, Newport, PO30 1XA

An acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint.

The complaint will be investigated by the appropriate SLT member. They will take responsibility for keeping the complainant informed and updated throughout the process.

Within 20 working days of initial receipt of the complaint the appropriate SLT member will write to the complainant with the outcome and any actions to be taken.

- Complaint upheld – Details why the complaint was upheld and what action will be taken.
- Complaint not upheld - Details why the complaint was not upheld.
- Complaint partially upheld – details why some elements upheld but not others

The response will include a copy of the complaints procedure giving details on how to appeal if they remain dissatisfied.

### **Formal Complaint Stage 2**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome or response to their complaint they can appeal to the CEO via the above address within 15 working days from the date on the Stage 1 complaint response outcome letter, otherwise the complaint will be closed.

An acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint. The complaint will be reviewed by the CEO / member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Once the review is complete the CEO will write to the complainant with their findings and any action taken.

- Complaint upheld – Details why the complaint was upheld and what action will be taken.
- Complaint not upheld - Details why the complaint was not upheld.
- Complaint partially upheld – details why some elements upheld but not others

### **Formal Complaint Stage 3**

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome or response to their complaint, it can be escalated to the Chair of Trustees, details of which can be provided on request via the above address. This must be done within 15 working days from the date on the Stage 2 complaint response outcome letter, otherwise the complaint will be closed.

An acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint.

Once the appeal is complete the Chair of Trustees or Vice Chair will write to the complainant with their findings and any action taken.

- Complaint upheld – Details why the complaint was upheld and what action will be taken.
- Complaint not upheld - Details why the complaint was not upheld.
- Complaint partially upheld – details why some elements upheld but not others

### **Additional information**

If during at any stage of the complaint investigation further investigations under disciplinary or criminal proceedings are required, then the complaints procedure will be suspended until those investigations have concluded. Likewise, the complaints procedure will be suspended if a complainant is actively seeking legal redress.

Where a complaint is against a member of staff then the staff member should be informed of what support is available to them.

If the complainant has been responded to satisfactorily and has exhausted this complaints procedure process IWYT retain the right to not respond to repeated complaints relating to the same matter.

This procedure is intended to be flexible and IWYT may bypass earlier stages of the procedure if the complaint is such that the CEO should be involved at the outset. Where the complaint is about an SLT member or the CEO the procedure will start at the appropriate stage.

IWYT will retain records of complaints.

**Complaints from outside the service relating to an individual counsellor or the counselling service in general.**

This type of complaint will initially be referred to the Head of Counselling and Wellbeing Services, and the Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure three stage process will be followed.

**Duty of Candour**

All Youth Trust staff have a duty of candour – a professional responsibility to be honest with clients when things go wrong. If an issue or error has come to light, the following must take place;

- Clients (and their parent/carer where appropriate) must be informed at once even if an investigation into the matter has not yet been resolved. The clients should be informed that an investigation is being carried out and explain what has been and not been established.
- Be clear about what you know and uncertainties remain
- Respond honestly to any questions the client may have
- Apologise to the client and explain what happened, what can be done to deal with any harm caused and what the Trust are doing to prevent the same happening to others.
- The apology is not an individual taking personal responsibility for something going wrong that isn't their fault. However, clients have the right to expect an apology from the most appropriate member of the team.
- The apology should be given in an appropriate venue eg somewhere calm and private
- The meeting should be followed up with a letter with a summary of what was discussed and reiterating the apology.
- In exceptional circumstance, in the event of a death or incapacity of a client, it may be necessary to speak to those closest to them about what happened. You must be open and honest with them and convey any information in a compassionate way. They must have time to ask questions at the meeting and afterwards.
- Staff should be encouraged to report issues as soon as possible so that lessons can be learned quickly, and clients protected from harm in the future.
- All complaints, near misses or incidents where a client has been harmed, are recorded and these are regularly reviewed by the senior clinical team.

<b>Policy Title</b>	Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure
<b>Policy Reference Number</b>	033b
<b>Last Updated</b>	January 2025
<b>Next Scheduled Update Due</b>	January 2028

**Appendix 1. RECORD OF FEEDBACK OR INFORMAL COMPLAINTS / NEGATIVE COMMENTS**

<b>DATE:</b>	
<b>VENUE:</b>	
<b>NAME:</b> This may be recorded as Anon if person wishes to remain anonymous and to take no further action.	
<b>TEL:</b> As above, not necessary if person does not wish to have this information recorded.	
<b>ADDRESS:</b> If appropriate	
<b>DETAILS OF COMMENT/COMPLAINT:</b>	
<b>STAFF NAME:</b> Member of staff to whom comment/complaint or negative comment was made.	
<b>OUTCOME:</b> Action taken (e.g. "resolved" "explanation/apology offered").	