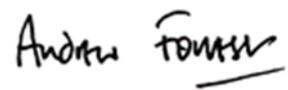


# Complaints Policy



<b>Date policy approved by Trustees</b>	<b>6 September 2019</b>
This Complaints Policy replaces all previous Complaints Policies and references to the Complaints Policy in other policies and documents from the implementation date set out below.	
<b>Date policy to be implemented</b>	<b>September 2019</b>
<b>Manager/s responsible for policy review</b>	Executive Director
<b>Date of next review</b> This policy is subject to annual review	August 2020
	
<b>John Holmes – Chair of Board</b>	<b>Andrew Forrest – Executive Director</b>

## 1 Purpose

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- 1.1 Great Yarmouth Community Trust welcomes feedback from anyone who participates in the services and activities we provide. It plays a crucial part in how we plan and improve the services that we deliver. We will provide a range of appropriate ways to ensure people’s voices are heard clearly.
- 1.2 This policy deals with those occasions when someone believes that a service which the Trust provides has not dealt with them fairly or they are dissatisfied with the quality of the service they have received.
- 1.3 Our policy is to:
  - ensure it is easy for people to make a complaint
  - provide a copy of this policy in induction or welcome packs for services and ensure that it is available at activities and published on the Trust’s website
  - respond in a timely and respectful manner to every complaint
  - ensure confidentiality for everyone involved in a complaint including any statements or records
  - welcome complaints as an opportunity to improve what we do
  - record and review complaints regularly to ensure we are learning as an organisation
  - challenge malicious complaints

- 1.4.1 This policy applies to anyone who participates in a service provided by Great Yarmouth Community Trust, including:
- Parents or carers and children attending a Day Nursery managed by the Trust or its trading subsidiary Little People’s Montessori Nursery;
  - Parents or carers and children who access Children Centre services provided by the Trust;
  - Pupils who attend Horatio House Independent School on a full or part time basis and their parents, carers or commissioners;
  - Adult learners and pupils including their parents, carers or school, who undertake learning at Nexus Engineering Centre;
  - People who attend community activities run by the Trust at the Priory Centre or in other venues;
  - People or groups who hire rooms from the Trust;
  - Employees of other organisations who work alongside staff and volunteers employed by the Trust.

## **2 Complaints Procedures – making a complaint**

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### **2.1 Stage 1: Informal**

- 2.1.1 Wherever possible a complaint or concern about a service or activity should be raised as soon as possible with a member of the Trust’s staff, who will seek to resolve it at that time. The member of staff should make a record of the complaint on the Trust’s Complaint Record form (appendix A) following the conversation with the person making the complaint.
- 2.1.2 If the member of staff feels unable to resolve the complaint they should make a written note of the conversation listing the name and contact details of the person with the concern and a brief summary of the issue. This should be forwarded to their line manager as soon as possible. The line manager will make contact with the person making the complaint within one working week and seek to resolve it within 5 working days. The Manager should make a record of the complaint on the Trust’s Complaint Record form following the conversation with the person making the complaint.
- 2.1.3 Completed Complaint Record Forms should be placed in the Team/Department Complaints Log.
- 2.1.4 If the complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the person making it or if they feel their complaint is too serious to be dealt with informally, they are able to move to stage 2.

## 2.2 Stage 2 – Formal

2.2.1 Formal complaints must be recorded on the Trust Complaint Record form (appendix A).

2.2.2 The person making the complaint should contact the Local Manager for the service about which they are complaining. For the purposes of this Policy the Local Managers are:

For Childcare Settings – the Nursery Manager

For Horatio House Independent School – the Headteacher

For the Priory Centre & Nexus Training Centre – the Centre Manager

For all other areas – the Executive Director

If the complaint is about or includes the Local manager, then the person making the complaint should contact the Executive Director on 01493 743000

If the complaint is about or includes the Executive Director, then the person making the complaint should contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees by email to: [chair@gyctrust.co.uk](mailto:chair@gyctrust.co.uk)

2.2.3 When first contacted, the Local Manager will arrange to meet with the person making the complaint within 5 working days. The person making the complaint may be accompanied by a friend or colleague to the meeting. The person who has made the complaint is able to bring a member of their family, a friend or a colleague to support them at the meeting.

2.2.4 If it has not been completed beforehand the Complaint Record form should be completed during this meeting. At the end of meeting the Local Manager will explain the next steps they will take following the complaint and the length of time this will take. Except in exceptional circumstances (e.g., a complaint being received about a term-time only service in the last week of a term) investigations should be completed within 10 working days.

2.2.5 Following the meeting the Local Manager will conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the complaint ensuring that they take written statements from individuals who may have been involved in, or witnessed, the situation or action leading to the complaint.

2.2.6 The Local Manager should refer to the Trust's Safeguarding and Disciplinary Policies and Procedures at the outset of their investigation to ensure that any actions they may take are compliant with these policies and procedures.

2.2.7 Where the complaint has identified a serious safeguarding concern about an employee or volunteer of the Trust then the Safeguarding Policy procedures for dealing with an allegation against staff will take precedence.

2.2.8 When they have completed the investigation the Local Manager will make a further appointment to meet with the person making the complaint and feedback to them

the outcome of their investigation, including whether the complaint has been upheld and, if so, what actions are being taken as a result. The person who has made the complaint is able to bring a member of their family, a friend or a colleague to support them at the meeting.

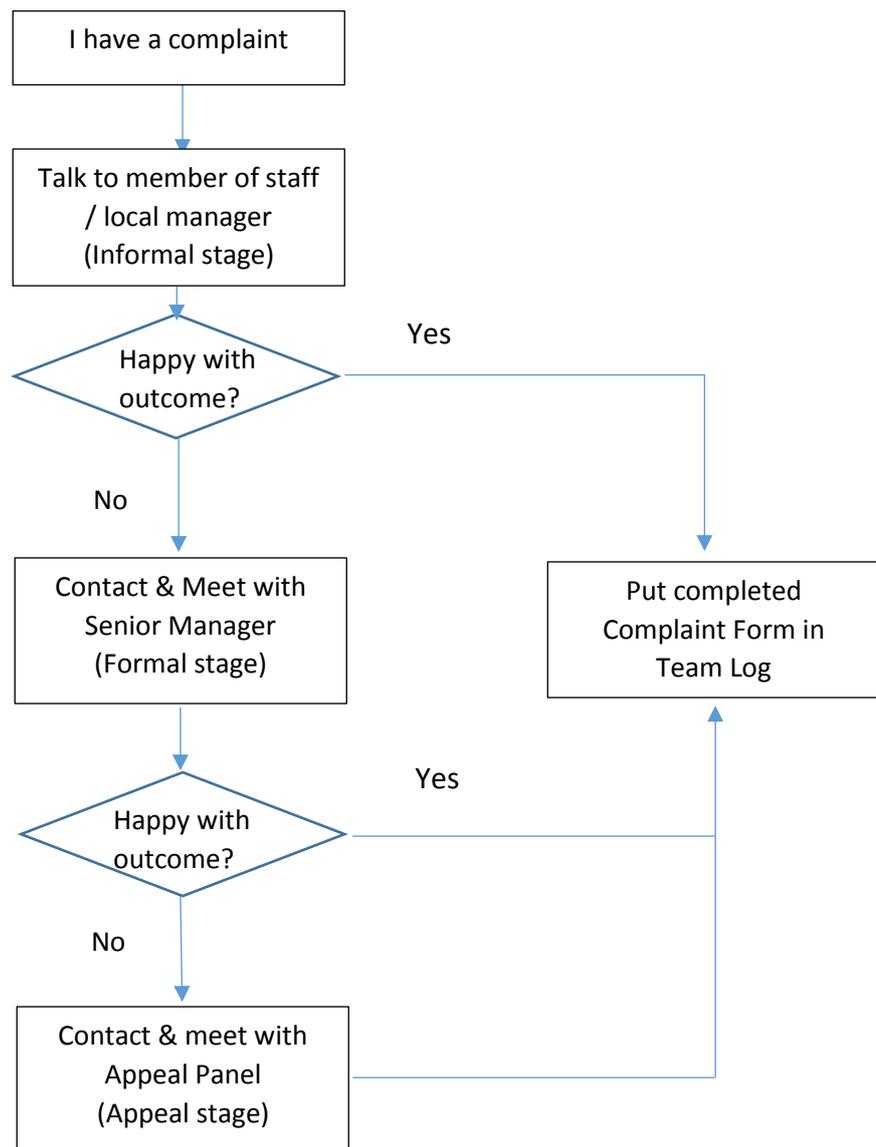
- 2.2.9 The Local Manager will provide a written outline of their findings to the person making the complaint at this meeting and explain how to appeal against their decision if they are not satisfied with the outcome. If relevant, a copy of this letter will be provided to the member of staff or volunteer about whom the complaint has been made.
- 2.2.11 Completed Complaint Record Forms should be placed in the Team or Department Complaints Log.

### **2.3 Stage 3 (Appeal)**

- 2.3.1 To appeal against the outcome of a formal complaint investigation, the person making the complaint should write to the person named in the letter they received at the end of the investigation. This must be within 10 working of the date of the letter.
- 2.3.2 The person named in the letter will either be the Executive Director or the Trustee responsible for appeals, depending on whether the Executive Director has been involved with the complaint before this time.
- 2.3.3 On receipt of a letter making an appeal, the person named in the letter will organise for an appeals panel consisting of themselves and two other people, neither of whom has had anything to do with complaint before, including an independent person separate from the Trust. The appeals panel will meet at a date and time convenient to the person making the appeal, this should be no later than 10 working days after receipt of the letter.
- 2.3.4 The person making the appeal is able to bring a member of their family, a friend or a colleague to support them at the meeting.
- 2.3.5 At the meeting of the appeals panel, following introductions, the person making the appeal will explain the reason why they are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint stage and explain what they would like the outcome to be. The Local Manager who dealt with the formal complaint will be present and will explain the reasons for their decision. The members of the appeals panel may ask any questions or view any of the investigatory statements and other evidence.
- 2.3.6 Once everyone has had their say the appeals panel will adjourn to consider its decision. Whenever possible the decision will be made the same day as the meeting. In exceptional circumstances the appeals panel may adjourn for longer in order to gather or view evidence that is not available at the meeting. As soon as possible after adjourning – and never more than 3 working days later – the chair panel will meet with the person making the complaint and let them know of the decision.

- 2.3.7 The appeals panel may agree or disagree with all or part of the outcome of the formal stage.
- 2.3.8 The decision of the appeals panel will be provided in writing to the person making the appeal and, when relevant, a copy provided to the member of staff or volunteer about whom the complaint has been made. A copy of the outcome of the appeals panel will be placed in the Team or Department's Complaints Log.
- 2.3.9 The decision of the appeals panel is final.

## 2.4 Outline of process



### **3 Monitoring of complaints**

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- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Local Manager to ensure that the Team Complaints Log is always up to date.
- 3.2 The Team Complaints Log should be available for Trustees, Executive Director and Ofsted Inspectors to view.
- 3.3 At the end of each month the Local Manager should submit a report to the Executive Director in the format set out in the Complaints Log Summary
- 3.4 The Executive Director shall conduct an audit of complaints once a year and report the findings to Board of Trustees.
- 3.5 An analysis of a full year's complaints summary will be used to inform the Trusts annual business improvement plan.

### **4 Making a complaint to Ofsted**

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- 4.1 Children, young people and parents/carers are able to make a complaint to OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education) at any time during the Trusts complaints procedure.
- 4.2 The telephone number for OFSTED is: 0300 123 1231  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)
- 4.3 The details explaining how to complain to OFSTED will be displayed in all Nursery settings, in Children's Centre venues and at Horatio House Independent School and Nexus Engineering Centre.

### **5 Governance**

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- 5.1 Trustees and non-Executive Directors of the business should be aware of the number and general nature of complaints.
- 5.2 Annually at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting, they should appoint one of their number to act as the Trustee with responsibility for appeals.

### **6 Security and retention of records**

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- 6.1 Team/Department Complaints Log should be kept in a secure filing cabinet when not in use. Only the Local Manager and their deputy shall have access to the log.
- 6.2 Paper copies of Complaint Record forms and Complaint Record summaries will be retained for five years. Before shredding a scanned copy will be made and kept in the Trust's e-archive.