

Complaints Policy of Looe Development Trust & Millpool Centre

Looe Development Trust and the Millpool Centre view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person [or organisation] that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure everyone at the Trust and the Millpool Centre knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

Definition of a Complaint.

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the operation of the Looe Development Trust and or the Millpool Centre, its staff and volunteers.

Where Complaints Come From:

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in the Millpool Centre or the Trust's activities.

A complaint can be received verbally in person or by phone, in writing by letter, email or social media.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use the Millpool Centre's Discipline and Grievance policies.

Confidentiality:

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, informing only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility:

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Secretary of the Looe Development Trust, Millpool Centre Management Committee and ultimately the Board of Trustees.

Review:

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on: 9th Jan 2017

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints concerning activities of the Millpool Centre may be sent to The Centre Manager, Millpool Centre, The Millpool, West Looe, Cornwall. PL13 2AF or by e-mail to manager@millpoolcentre.org. Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 01503 265947 or in person to any of Millpool Centre staff, volunteers or Trustees at the Millpool Centre. For Trust matters complaints may be sent to The Secretary, Looe Development Trust in writing to the Millpool Centre address or by email to ldt.looe@btinternet.com.

Receiving Complaints:

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Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded. The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to the Trust and / or Millpool Centre (for example: client, volunteer, visitor)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see Appendix 1

Resolving Complaints:

Stage One:

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Millpool Centre Manager within one week.

If the complaint involves the Manager, it must be passed to The Millpool Centre Management Committee.

On receiving the complaint the Manager, or in the case of direct Trust activities the Trust Secretary, should record it in a complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, an appropriate person will be delegated to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within 3 weeks. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within six weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two:

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Looe Development Trust Board of Trustees., via the Secretary to the Trust.

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The request for (a stage two) Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The nominated Looe Development Trust representative may investigate the facts of the case themselves or refer to the Chairman if appropriate. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants escalated to board level should receive a definitive reply within six weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage:

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

Variation of the Complaints Procedure:

The Looe Development Trust Board of Trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chairman should not also have the Chairman as the person leading a Stage Two review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints:

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

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Appendix 1 –

Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal