



Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 CAS supports the VCSE sector (voluntary, community and social enterprise) and is accountable to its trustees and stakeholders. We aim to provide high quality advice and support however we recognise that from time to time you may feel dissatisfied with the service you received.
- 1.2 We take all concerns seriously and we will approach these in a responsible, fair and consistent manner. This policy therefore sets out how we will investigate and resolve complaints, and the learning from these.

2. Complaints and Concerns

- 2.1 If you have any concerns about a service you have received from us please tell the officer or their line manager as soon as possible so we can quickly understand your concerns and try to put things right.

3. Principles of CAS's complaints policy and procedure

- 3.1 The following principles are used:
 - We recognise that complaints are an important part of customer feedback
 - The procedure is accessible to everyone
 - Concerns and complaints are dealt with efficiently and are properly investigated
 - You will receive a timely and appropriate response, identifying the outcome of any investigation, wherever possible
 - Action is taken where necessary of the outcome of the complaint and will be used to improve our services
 - If you are not happy with the response you receive you will have the right to appeal

4. Timescales and Reasonable Adjustments to the Complaints Procedure

- 4.1 You must raise your complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame in exceptional circumstances.
- 4.2 We will consider making reasonable adjustments, to enable you to access and complete this procedure.

CAS's Three stage complaints process

We have three stages to our procedure, at each stage please provide as much detail as possible to help us resolve your complaint quickly. If we do not have all the details to deal with the complaint, we may contact you and ask for further information.

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5. **Stage One – Informal complaints or concerns**

- 5.1 In the first instance, complaints or concerns should be raised with the appropriate officer. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate then please speak to the officer's line manager.
- 5.2 Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days and a full outcome received within 10 working days from date of receipt.
- 5.3 If your complaint is about a line manager, it should be raised with the appropriate Senior or Executive Team Manager.
- 5.4 If you complain through social media we will contact you and advise you of the complaints procedure to follow
- 5.5 In some cases we may not be able to send a full reply within 10 working days. If this happens, we will inform you of the reasons why explain when a full reply will be given.

6. **Stage Two - Formally registering a complaint**

- 6.1 If you are not satisfied with the outcome or you want your complaint formally investigated, then Stage Two should be used.
- 6.2 You should outline your complaint in writing along with sending any documents about the matter and send it to hr@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk or posted to Community Action Suffolk, Brightspace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, IP2 0HH marking it confidential and for the attention of the Louise Bradshaw, HR Manager.
- 6.3 If your complaint is about the Chief Executive then it should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees and marked as private and confidential and sent to the postal address above.
- 6.4 All complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days and we aim to resolve them through a process of clarification, investigation and taking into account the resolutions sought by you.
- 6.5 You will usually receive a full response within 10 working days from the date of receipt. However in some cases we may not be able to send a full reply within 10 working. If this happens, we will inform you of the reasons why and explain when a full reply will be given.
- 6.6 We will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with separately.

7. **Stage Three (Appeal)**

- 7.1 If you are not satisfied with the response, the final stage is to appeal the decision by outlining the reasons to the Chief Executive (or the Board of Trustees if it is about the Chief Executive). This should be done in writing within 7 days of receipt of the outcome of the Stage 2 decision.
- 7.2 The Chief Executive will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within 5 working days and a recommendation will be made within 15 working days.
- 7.3 You will be informed in writing of the outcome and the decision reached will then be final and no further appeals will be possible.
- 7.4 If you wish to withdraw your complaint at any time you will need to do this in writing.

Complaints monitoring, investigation and learning

8. Recording complaints

8.1 All Stage Two complaints will be recorded on the complaints register which will be held by HR.

9. Investigating Complaints

9.1 All investigations will seek to:

- Identify and understand the circumstances which led to the complaint
- The steps to be taken to prevent reoccurrence
- Preserve your confidentiality other than where strictly needed
- Present the outcome in writing, addressing each aspect of the complaint
- To establish whether to uphold a complaint (in full or in part) or not

10. Complaints Review and Reporting

10.1 All Stage Two complaints will be reviewed by the Executive team on a quarterly basis. A summary of the complaints will be reported annually to the board of trustees.

11. Disciplinary procedures

11.1 Some complaints may identify information about serious matters which indicate the need for a disciplinary investigation. In such cases, our Disciplinary policy would also apply however we will not disclose details of any disciplinary procedures followed or action that has been taken as a result of a complaint.

12. Complaints from staff

12.1 Staff who have complaints about other staff or the organisations work should take forward their concerns using the appropriate internal policy and procedure.

12.2 Staff may seek advice in the first instance from their line manager or HR.

Issue & revision history

Date	Author	Version	Details
29.4.2019	L Bradshaw	1.0	Re-written Complaints policy and procedure
6.5.2019	L Bradshaw	1.0	SWC Approved policy
11.5.2021	L Bradshaw	1.1	Reviewed and added sections on Reasonable Adjustments and timescales and how to withdraw. Whole policy has been condensed down to make it more accessible
20.5.2021	L Bradshaw	1.1	Approved by the board



Complaints Form

Please read our Complaints Policy and Procedure to learn more about how CAS resolves complaints

Your details

Name	
Email address	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Phone number	
Address	
Please provide details of any requirements we need to keep in mind when dealing with your complaint and communicating with you	

Details of the complaint

Project/ person/ service the complaint is about	
Date of incident	
If you have already verbally spoken to the staff member regarding your complaint please provide their name	
Details of the incident	
Details of any action taken following the incident	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Please provide any further details you think may be relevant	