

Complaints and compliments

Updated Review: June 2009

Date to be reviewed: April – June 2010



Purpose

Voluntary Action Westminster is committed to providing the best possible service for its members.

Compliments – VAW values feedback regarding its staff and services, whether positive or negative. All compliments will be acknowledged, and will be passed to both staff involved and their line manager. A copy of the compliment will be kept on the employee's personnel file.

Complaints - In order to be constantly developing and improving our services, it is important that we receive feedback from our members including comments, suggestions and complaints. The complaints procedure is intended to provide a fair structure for making and dealing with complaints.

Principles

- People making complaints have the right to be treated equally and not suffer discrimination.
- People making a complaint are entitled to seek external assistance to advocate on their behalf.
- Complaints are to be treated with an open mind and will be investigated without prejudice.
- People making complaints have the right to confidentiality. If requested, names will not be disclosed in investigating complaints. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated.
- Abusive and offensive comments are not defined as complaints and will not be accepted as complaints.

Notes

Once we have received your complaint we will do our best to respond to it quickly and thoroughly and where appropriate to make changes in our practice.

Complaints are to be treated seriously and dealt with in good time.

This policy is not to be used for grievances by staff – please refer to the grievance procedure for this. This policy is for external complaints.

Process

- The complaint should be made in writing to one of the VAW management team. If you do not feel you can approach one of the team or your complaint is regarding one of the team, you can make your complaint to the Chair of the Board
- The written submission should provide information about the nature of the complaint, and also the positive outcome you would wish to be achieved by bringing the complaint. This does not create an obligation on VAW to resolve the outcome in this way
- Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within five working days
- The complaint will normally be dealt with by the Chief Executive or appointed deputy, who will consult with the Chair of the Board and investigate the circumstances leading to the complaint
- If your complaint is regarding the Chair of the Board, this may be dealt with by the Vice Chair
- The Chief Executive or appointed deputy will write to you to inform you of the result of investigation within 21 working days
- If you are dissatisfied with the results, you will have the right to put your case directly to the Board in writing in the first instance
- If a complaint is made against a member of VAW staff or Board, they will have the right to present their case to their line manager or to the Chair of the Board
- If a complaint results in disciplinary action being taken against a member of VAW staff, this will follow the disciplinary procedure.

Record keeping

- VAW will keep complaints / compliments file where all records of complaints and compliments will be filed and kept for two years.

The Chief Executive will be responsible for ensuring the Complaints / Compliments file is kept up to date.