



# **COMPLAINTS/COMPLIMENTS/ COMMENTS POLICY**

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## STOP HATE UK

### COMPLAINTS/COMPLIMENTS/COMMENTS POLICY -

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Complaints and compliments are an essential part of Stop Hate UK's ability to deliver services. The experience of service-users or must be viewed as a positive opportunity to monitor the services Stop Hate UK delivers and also to reflect on how these can be improved. Therefore, the following guidelines are followed by all staff/Trustees and volunteers at Stop Hate UK.
- 1.2 This policy and standard forms can be accessed by contacting the office or via our website: [stophateuk.org](http://stophateuk.org)
- 1.3 Stop Hate UK aims to provide good-quality services but recognises that things can sometimes go wrong and misunderstandings do happen. Where they do, we need to know so we can put them right. Complaints are inevitable but we choose to learn from them and see them as a positive way of making improvements or changes in the way we provide services.
- 1.4 The complaints policy is intended to protect the rights of all service users by encouraging a fair and open resolution of individual concerns. It will assist in the overall improvement of our services by maintaining both standards of professional practice and confidence in the service.
- 1.5 Stop Hate UK hopes that we can resolve issues in an informal way wherever possible. If you feel able we therefore encourage you to raise the issue with a member of staff in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied or feel that the matter is too serious to be raised in this way then we encourage you to use the formal route for resolution.
- 1.6 A copy of the complaints leaflet will be made available to all. A copy of the full policy will be made available to anyone who makes a complaint. Comments on the policy and procedure are welcomed.
- 1.7 Stop Hate UK also recognises that clients may wish to give a compliment for services they have received or thanks to a staff member or team. This can be done in writing, in person or by telephone. A form will be provided (Appendix Two) to record all compliments and thanks. A client, their representative, or an employee of Stop Hate UK can complete this form.



The Chief Executive and the Board will ensure thanks and appreciations are passed on to the relevant employee or team.

## **2. Complaints and Compliments Forms**

- 2.1 Complaints, comments and compliments forms should be made available to clients on request. Self-addressed envelopes addressed to the Chief Executive (or Chair if the complaint is about the Chief Executive) should be attached to the forms when requested.

## **3. Communicating the Policy**

- 3.1 All staff, volunteer undertaking assessments/initial interviews should communicate how to make a complaint/compliment or comment and compliments forms, their purpose and the procedure for making a complaint/compliment or comment.
- 3.2 The assessment/interview form will include a prompt to communicate the policy/procedure and this should be signed by the clients, volunteers and staff member.
- 3.3 Helpline Operators will offer the information if requested but all callers to the line will sent information on how to access the complaints/compliments/comments policy should they need to.

## **4. Procedure for Dealing with Complaints**

### **4.1 Who Can Complain?**

- Any person/client receiving or seeking a service from Stop Hate UK
- Any person who has been declined a service
- Any volunteer who has been assisting as volunteer, any person acting on behalf of any of the above
- Any person receiving services from contractors or service providers on behalf of Stop Hate UK



#### 4.2 How to Make a Complaint

Complaints can be made in writing, by using the attached complaints form, in person or by telephone. The complaints form (Appendix One) will be used to record a complaint. An employee of Stop Hate UK can complete this form on behalf of a complainant. A complainant can also complete the complaints form themselves, or with the help of an advocate. All written complaints and compliment forms should be marked private and confidential and sent to:

The Chief Executive  
Stop Hate UK  
FREEPOST NEA12611  
LS7 3YY

Telephone 0113 2935100  
Fax Number 0113 2935102

Unless the complaint is about the Chief Executive in which case the complaint should be marked private and confidential and sent to:

The Chair  
Stop Hate UK  
FREEPOST NEA12611  
LS7 3YY

#### 4.3 What Happens When a Complaint is made

Upon receiving a complaint, Stop Hate UK will:

- Listen and record the complaint
- Acknowledge the complaint in writing within **3 working days** and provide details of the Investigating Officer and date by which a full response will be made. This will normally be within 10 working days but in exceptional circumstances where intensive investigations are required could be longer. The letter will state the ACTUAL date the response will be sent by.
- Investigate the complaint
- Respond within the above time scales. Where there is a delay, for whatever reasons, an interim response will be provided, informing the complainant of progress and a date when a full response can be expected.
- Provide an explanation for what happened
- If Stop Hate UK are in the wrong, we will:
  - Offer an apology;
  - Take steps to put matters right and explain to how we will do this;
  - Review policies, procedures and practices, as appropriate;
  - Ensure that lessons are learnt and what went wrong is not repeated in the future;



- Monitor the number of compliments and complaints received and provide **quarterly reports** to the Board of Trustees.

#### 4.4 Representation and Advocacy

If a person does not feel confident about making a complaint on their own, they can ask someone to do so on their behalf or seek their help to write a letter or complete the complaints form. Support can be sought from:

- An advocacy service
- A friend or relative or other client
- A legal representative
- Your local Councillor or Member of Parliament
- Any employee/volunteer of Stop Hate UK

If someone is raising a complaint on your behalf we will ask you to provide written confirmation that you have given them permission to do so.

Stop Hate UK can give those wishing to complain assistance in bringing a complaint, including help with translation, interpretation, signing etc. Stop Hate UK will be sensitive to the physical and cultural needs of complainants and potential barriers to making a complaint.

Complainants are encouraged to use advocacy organisations that may be able to help them.

#### 4.5 Time Scales

All time limits set out in this procedure are a guide to help us deal with complaints effectively and efficiently. It is acknowledged that some complaints are complex and will require more time to investigate. In such cases the complainant will be kept informed of any delays.

- |               |                     |                  |
|---------------|---------------------|------------------|
| ■ Stage One   | Informal complaints | as agreed by you |
| ■ Stage Two   | Formal complaints   | 10 working days  |
| ■ Stage Three | Appeal process      | 21 working days  |

The above timescales do not affect the requirement to acknowledge all formal complaints (at stage 2 and at stage 3), within **3 working days**.

#### 4.6 Exemptions - Complaints Falling Outside the Scope of the Policy

Examples of these include:



- Complaints from employees about matters relating to their employment including recruitment will normally be dealt with under Stop Hate UK's Grievance and Disputes Procedure.
- Complaints about the recruitment and selection process (these are covered by the Recruitment and Selection Policy).
- Complaints that are outside of the control of Stop Hate UK.
- Complaints that relate to services that are the responsibility of other providers or agencies.
- Some complaints may fall outside the scope of this policy. Where this is the case other policies or procedures may apply, for example; a matter subject to Police investigation. The Chief Executive will consider each case on its merits and where an exemption applies they will ensure decisions are explained to complainants.
- Similarly, a range of matters may take a complaint into Stop Hate UK's Disciplinary Procedure. Complaints about the behaviour of a worker, serious breach of policy and procedure will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure. Details of investigations or outcomes of this action will not normally be made public to the complainant although we will provide as much information as possible to ensure that the complainant understands that the complaint has been taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- Vexatious complaints i.e. repeat complaints that relate to a complaint already lodged or where the same complaint is made by the same complainant but with a slightly different angle will not normally be reconsidered through the stages of the Complaints Procedure. A different complaint from the same complainant, however, will be considered on its own merits.

#### 4.7 Definitions

Complainant - The person making a complaint about services received or sought from Stop Hate UK.

Representative or advocate - A representative is a person assisting the complainant, to make their complaint. The representative maybe a family member, another clients, local Councillor, Member of Parliament or someone from an agency providing advocacy services or legal representation.

Board - Trustees and officers elected to serve on Stop Hate UK's Board

#### 4.8



4.9 The stages in the complaints procedure are as follows:

#### Stage 1 - Informal resolution

If you have concerns about any of our services then you should complain directly to the service you are not happy with. You can speak to one of our employees/manager at the point at which you receive the service. Hopefully, they will resolve the problem straightaway. The emphasis will be on identifying nature of the complaint, and identifying an appropriate course of action, wherever possible using appropriate informal resolution.

On occasion complaints are of a very serious nature and complainants may wish to bypass stage one and bring a formal complaint straight to stage two.

#### Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

If the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response, then the complaint should be reported to the Chief Executive this will then be acknowledged in writing within **3 working days** of receiving it and an Investigating Officer appointed. The Chair of the Board will carry out investigations where the complaint relates to the Chief Executive.

The Investigating Officer will reply within **13 working days** of receiving the complaint. Sometimes longer may be needed, but the reasons for any delay will be explained in writing, and the complainant will be informed when they can expect a full reply. The reply will include details of the investigation, our findings and any action we may take as a consequence of the complaint. The complainant will also be advised of their right to appeal, if they are still unhappy about the outcome of their complaint.

If the complainant has an advocate or representative, they will also be sent copies of correspondence.

The Investigating Officer will keep a record of the complaint and any related papers and notes.

#### Stage 3 - Appeal



If the complainant is dissatisfied with the conclusions reached by the Investigating Officer at Stage 2, they can ask the Chief Executive of Stop Hate UK to review their complaint.

The appeal letter sent by the complainant will be acknowledged in writing within **3 working days**. A reply should be sent within **15 working days**. If it is likely to take longer, the complainant will be notified of the reasons for this, and will be told when they can expect a full reply.

#### Stage 4 - Appeal to the Board

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the conclusions reached by the Chief Executive at Stage 3, they can ask the Board of Stop Hate UK to review their complaint.

An Appeal Panel consisting of the Chief Executive, the Chair of the Board, and one other Board Member will carry out a full review of the complaint.

The complainant will be invited to present their concerns in writing or in person. The Stage Two investigation manager will present the findings of the investigation and make recommendations.

The Appeals Panel will review all the paperwork and correspondence e.g. letters, complaints form (if used), notes of interviews or witness statements etc related to the complaint.

The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.

#### 4.10 Complaints about the Chief Executive

A complaint about the Chief Executive of Stop Hate UK can be made in writing or on the complaints form and should be sent to the Chair of the Board. The Chair, the Vice Chair or other Board Member will act as the Investigating Officer. The Chair and two members of the Board will review complaints relating to the Chief Executive.

The Investigating Officer will make recommendations to resolve the complaint, including changes to the policy or the way Stop Hate UK's services are provided.

Any recommendations that have disciplinary implications will be dealt with separately in accordance with Stop Hate UK's Disciplinary Procedure.

The Board is not at liberty to divulge the details of any action taken against an employee of Stop Hate UK. Nevertheless the Board can confirm that action has been taken. It is noted that any Board members involved in a



Stage 3 complaint, should not participate in an appeal hearing arising out of the Disciplinary Procedure, as a result of the same complaint.

#### 4.11 Complaints about Board Members

Complaints about a member of the Board can be made in writing to the Chair of the Board. Alternatively, they can be made in writing to the Chief Executive of Stop Hate UK, who will pass them on to the Chair.

The Chair will investigate the complaint or will appoint an Investigating Officer from the Board to do so. In the event of a complaint against the Chair, the Vice Chair will investigate the complaint.

The Investigating Officer and two Board members will make recommendations to resolve the complaint, including changes to the policy or the way Stop Hate UK provides its services.

An appeal should be made in writing to the Board within **21 working days** of receiving the reply. The Board Member who is the subject of the complaint will not have any involvement in decisions relating to the complaint.

The decision of the Board will be final. External routes may be followed should this be required e.g. ombudsman.

### 5. Reporting of Complaints/Compliments

5.1 The Chief Executive will prepare a report on all complaints/compliments for the Board **twice a year**. This will include:-

- Number of complaints;
- Whether these were formal or informal;
- Any trends;
- Outcome;
- Impact on policy or procedure;
- Number of appeals.
- Impact on policy/procedure



## Stop Hate UK Complaint Record Form

If for any reason you are unable to complete this form then a member of our staff or a representative of your choice may assist you.

### Complainant's Details

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

..... Post code: .....

Phone: .....

Mobile: .....

Email: .....

Circle the description that best applies to you:

- a) A service user/ex-service user
- b) A referrer
- c) A supplier
- d) Volunteer helpline operator
- e) Other (please specify): .....



**What are you complaining about?**

Please give details of date and time of the incident/event including names, witnesses, what occurred and any relevant information that will help us to investigate your concerns.

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What has been the effect of this on you? .....

.....

.....

Are there any other agencies involved? Please list: .....

.....

Continue on separate sheets, if required.

Attach to the record. Number of additional sheets [    ]

**What resolution might you want seek? For example, an apology, a written reply, your concerns noted but no further action, service to be provided differently, a particular course of action etc**

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**Advocate/representative's contact details**

Name: .....



Agency/Relationship with complainant: .....

Address: .....

.....

..... Post code: .....

Phone: .....

Mobile: .....

Email: .....

**Signature of complainant or advocate/representative**

Name: .....

Signature: ..... Date.....

Advocate/representative must have the agreement & support of the complainant to sign the form on their behalf. Complaints that are not supported by the complainant may not be investigated.

**When completed, please send this form in an envelope marked 'Private and Confidential' to: The Chief Executive, Stop Hate UK, FREEPOST NEA12611, LS7 3YY.**

**For Office Use Only**

Complaint Recorded By: ..... Position: .....

Signature: ..... Date complaint was received: .....

Acknowledgement letter to be sent (within 3 working days) by: .....

Full reply to be sent by (within 15 working days): .....

Investigating Officer: .....

Stage One [ ] tick

Stage Two [ ] tick

Stage Three [ ] tick



# Stop Hate UK Compliment Record Form

If for any reason you are unable to complete this form then a member of our staff or a representative of your choice may assist you.

## Service user/customer details

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

..... Post code: .....

Phone: .....

Mobile: .....

Email: .....

Circle the description that best applies to you:

- a) A service user/ex-service user
- b) A referrer
- c) A supplier
- d) Volunteer helpline operator
- e) Other (please specify): .....

## Details of compliments and thanks

Please give details of the person/persons/event you would like to give a compliment or thanks to:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Signature of service user/volunteer operator

.....



Name: .....

Signature .....Date.....

Family members, client advocates or representatives must have the agreement & support of the service user to sign the form on their behalf.

**When completed, please send this form in an envelope marked 'Private and Confidential' to either The Chief Executive, Stop Hate UK, FREEPOST NEA12611, LS7 3YY.**

**Thank you for taking the time to give your compliments and thanks. The Chief Executive and the Board will be made aware of your appreciation.**

**For Office Use Only**

Compliment recorded or received by:..... on: .....

Position: ..... Signature: .....



# Stop Hate UK Comment Record Form

If for any reason you are unable to complete this form then a member of our staff or a representative of your choice may assist you.

## Service user/customer details

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

..... Post code: .....

Phone: .....

Mobile: .....

Email: .....

Circle the description that best applies to you:

- a) A service user/ex-service user
- b) A referrer
- c) A supplier
- d) Volunteer helpline operator
- e) Other (please specify): .....

## Details of comment

Please give details of the person/service/policy/procedure/event you would like to comment on:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Signature of service user/volunteer operator

Name: .....



Signature .....Date.....

Family members, client advocates or representatives must have the agreement & support of the service user to sign the form on their behalf.

**When completed, please send this form in an envelope marked 'Private and Confidential' to: The Chief Executive, Stop Hate UK, FREEPOST NEA12611, LS7 3YY.**

**Thank you for taking the time to give your compliments and thanks.**

**For Office Use Only**

Comment recorded or received by:..... on: .....

Position: ..... Signature: .....

Guidance for Staff on how to investigate a Complaint

- Members of staff implicated in a complaint should be informed about the nature & source of complaint;
- As part of any investigative process the staff member should be interviewed, as this will give the opportunity for staff to present their side/version of events.
- All discussions and involvement of staff is subject to the timescales in the above policy
- As part of the process individuals should be given the opportunity to respond and present any evidence may have in their possession.