

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

Gloucestershire Gateway Trust (GGT) views 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 making 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 GGT 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 GGT.

### Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in GGT including partners, donors, volunteers, employees, members of the local community and other stakeholders.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

### Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling 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 Chief Executive and the Board.

### Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

## Contact Details for Complaints

Written complaints should be sent to Jason Dunsford, Chief Executive, City Works, Alfred Street, Gloucester, GL1 4DF or email [jason@ggtrust.org](mailto:jason@ggtrust.org).

Verbal complaints should be made by phone to 01452 520182 or in person at the above address.

In the event of the Chief Executive being the subject of a complaint it should instead be sent to the Company Secretary at the above address and marked 'private and confidential'.

## Receiving Complaints

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

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 GGT.
- 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.

## Resolving Complaints

### Stage one

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within one week. 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 four 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 remains dissatisfied they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Company Secretary.

The request for 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 Company Secretary will undertake a review of the case and may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at stage one.

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

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four 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.

### **Stage three**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied or indeed at any time they may complain to the Charity Commission.

#### *Variation of the Complaints Procedure*

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair 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.

### **Children and Family Centre Services**

Gloucestershire Gateway Trust is commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) to run targeted family support services through its Children and Family Centres in Gloucester and the Forest of Dean districts, as part of the council's Early Help Partnership across the county.

We believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our services and will give timely responses to any concerns about the running of the children and family centres. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with complaints.

Concerns and complaints should be viewed constructively and be used to improve services, inform centre evaluation and future plans.

### **Why are we doing this?**

- To enable service users to be able to put forward their views and ideas in order to improve the quality of the services we provide.
- To respond promptly and positively to any complaints that may be made and look to find solutions where possible.

## What will we do?

### Stage one

Anyone who is uneasy about an aspect of the centre's provision talks over, his/her worries and anxieties, in the first instance, with:

- The Centre and Volunteer Coordinator or their Family Support Worker/Community Family Support Worker
- The Team Manager

Anyone who requires a written response to their concerns should request one at this stage.

### Stage two

If **stage one** does not result in a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem re-occurs, the complainant can initiate **stage two** by making a formal complaint in writing to the Team Manager, who will investigate the complaint. The complainant can expect a written reply in acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint, as well as some indication of how and when the complaint will be addressed within 5 working days.

When a formal complaint has been fully investigated, the Team Manager will ensure that the person who made the complaint is informed, in writing, of the outcome.

### Stage three

If the person who made the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they should contact the Director of the Children and Family Centres by email at [alison@ggtrust.org](mailto:alison@ggtrust.org)

The Director of Children and Family Centres will review the complaint and work with the Chief Executive to resolve the complaint. They will follow the GGT complaints policy as described above. A complaints log will be kept and held at Gloucestershire Gateway Trust.

## How are we going to make sure this is implemented?

We will respond to a complaint by:

- Dealing promptly and courteously to all complaints.
- If the matter cannot be resolved, the staff member will remind the complainant of the next stage in the procedure and timescale for a response.
- Complainants will be fully informed of progress at all stages.

It is the responsibility of the Senior Management team to monitor and review the effectiveness of all the policies relating to Children and Families.

This Policy is underpinned by GGT's Safeguarding Policy – please see Safeguarding Policy for details.