



Fihankra meaning a safe house, safety and security.



Nottingham Central Women's Aid Complaints Policy

Reviewed October 2021 Review: September 2023

Related documents

NCWA Disciplinary & Grievance procedures
Confidentiality Policy

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Purpose

NCWA aims to offer the highest level of service at all times. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be the need to raise a concern about an aspect of our work or the conduct of our staff. We take all feedback, both good and bad, very seriously and are continually working to improve the level of service we provide. We are committed to ensuring that every individual is treated with respect and equality. A complaint is any report about poor service from us.



Below you will find different ways you can contact us, what you can expect when you do contact us and how we use your comments, complaints and ideas to make sure that we offer the highest level of customer service possible.

Comments and Compliments

If you would like to formally pass on a compliment or thank you to someone in NCWA, please speak to member of staff or send the information by one of the contact methods shown below. We will ensure that all compliments are passed to the relevant individual and are shared with the internal management team.

Letting us know what we are doing well helps us to do more of it and continue to increase the level of service we can offer to our customers/service users.

Contact Details

Nottingham Central Women's Aid C/O, 27-31, Carlton Road, Nottingham, NG3 2DG

Email: Support@centralwomensaid.org

Telephone: 0115 9607943

Raising a Concern

We encourage open dialogue where possible to talk through any areas of concern as soon as possible in order that they can be addressed quickly. Please discuss your concerns with your key worker if appropriate or another member of staff or ask to speak to the manager. Alternatively, the board of trustees can be contacted via email at Trustees@centralwomensaid.org.

It is important to establish the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the likelihood of them developing into formal complaints and the staff member initially approached about this should endeavour to resolve the situation within the boundaries of her delegated authority. However, whether you either make a complaint or refrain from making one is your choice and no-one should exert any pressure on you. If you are not satisfied with the response or wish to express your concerns formally you can still do so.

Raising a formal complaint

A complaint is when you express to us your dissatisfaction with a particular aspect of the work of NCWA. For example, if you believe that:

- We have failed to do something that we undertook to do;
- We have made a wrong decision;
- The way we carried out a service was not appropriate or unsatisfactory;
- You are unhappy about the performance of our services;
- You are dissatisfied with a policy or a procedure;



- You feel you have been treated unfairly;
- You feel harassed, bullied or discriminated against by a member of staff;

How to make a complaint:

Complaints can be made in person, over the phone or in writing. You could also ask a third party to make a complaint on your behalf e.g. The Nottingham Law Centre or a Solicitor.

What we need you to do (the complainant): Take your time to explain your concerns/complaint and provide specific information to help us determine the appropriate course of action and to start our investigations.

Telephone complaint

We will record your complaint on a NCWA complaint form on your behalf.

Written Complaint

Written complaints can be sent by letter, e-mail or by completing the NCWA complaints form.

Complaints in person

Service Users will be encouraged to complete the NCWA complaint form if they raise a complaint in person. However, it is important that a service user is not put off by this request. Therefore, staff should offer the necessary support to make this process accessible to all service users. No matter how the complaint is made it will be registered on the log of complaints with a unique reference number and dealt with in accordance with our Confidentiality Policy and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

NCWA's commitment to you is that we will:

- Handle your complaint swiftly and keep you informed of the situation;
- Investigate all complaints thoroughly and objectively;
- Seek your personal consent to disclose information to others (if necessary) when investigating complaints;
- Provide accessible support to meet your specific needs;
- Provide you with a full response which addresses all of the issues you have raised;
- Provide clear guidelines about what to do if you are unhappy with our response;
- Record and monitor all complaints taking the relevant action.

3. Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Acknowledging your complaint

We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of its receipt and let you know who will be investigating your concerns. We will send you a copy of the NCWA Customer Care leaflet (see content in Appendix A).



Stage 2 - Keeping you updated

The contact person will be responsible for ensuring that they read through the complaint. They will start the internal investigation, speaking with the relevant individuals involved in the complaint and decide how to respond. They will also make contact with you at this stage within 10 working days.

Stage 3 – Communicating our decision

We will aim to send a formal response to you within 21 days*, which will confirm:

- The final decision about the complaint;
- The reason for the decision;
- The solution, if appropriate, which will be offered, e.g. an apology;
- Any action that may have been taken in the light of the Investigation;
- Additional help or information directing you to other sources of advice or support (if needed).

**Please note: We aim to complete all investigations within 21 working days of receiving your complaint, however, on occasion due to holidays; sickness or other planned absence the relevant internal staff may not be readily available to support the investigation. If this is the case, we will make you aware of this within 10 working days of receiving your complaint.*

Stage 4 - Appealing a complaint decision

If you are still dissatisfied, you or your representative should reply to the contact person named in the decision letter within 10 working days of having received our response. When appealing against the decision you should also outline the reasons for the appeal.

The contact person will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 3 working days

The details will be forwarded on to the Board of Trustees.

Arrangements will be made for a review of the complaints handling either by the trustees or the senior management.

This will cover:

- The process;
- Whether the procedure has been followed properly and fairly;
- The reason for the decision;
- The solution, if appropriate, which was offered;
- What action/decisions may be taken in light of the review.

The review meeting will be held within 10 working days of your appeal. You can attend this meeting with a representative or a friend/relative.

The complainant will be informed in writing of the result of the appeal within seven days of this meeting. The decision reached at this stage of the complaint will then be final.



If a complainant has been through NCWA's complaints procedure and still remain dissatisfied they should be given the following contact list: A solicitor or Nottingham Law Centre, the Citizens Advice Bureau or the Women's Aid Federation of England.

Complaints against staff members

If the complaint concerns a member of staff the complaint will be investigated by the project manager and referred to the Trustees. If the complaint concerns the project manager it will be referred to the Trustees automatically. If a disciplinary hearing is required this will be carried out by the Trustees. The NCWA Disciplinary Procedures will then be the relevant policy document to follow. This will be dealt with in accordance with our Confidentiality Policy and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Serious complaints

If the complaint concerns a serious allegation then it should be referred to the Chair of the Trustees who will convene a meeting of two trustees to investigate the complaint/allegation. If the complaint is against a member of staff including the project manager they may be suspended whilst the investigation is carried out. If necessary, the complaint may need to be referred to other relevant external agencies such as Nottingham Police or Social Services for example. The initial timescale will still apply in the first instance.

Monitoring & Review

The complaint once resolved will be reviewed so that any recommendations for change in services or procedures can be implemented appropriately. The Complaints log will be updated and maintained with brief details and actions undertaken and outcome of the complaint.

The Board of Trustees will receive a summary of complaints and actions at each Board meeting in order to oversee if there are recurring themes and that the appropriate actions have been taken.

Equality & Fairness

Service users will not be discouraged from complaining nor treated any less favourably because they have made a complaint. If at any stage a complainant feels victimised because they have made a complaint, the member of staff available will advise the complainant of the option to instigate a further complaint to be dealt with separately under the procedure. This should be treated as a serious issue.

Customer Care leaflet

This sheet tells you how to make a complaint and the procedure we will follow when dealing with your complaint.



NCWA is run by women for women providing support and advice for women and their children experiencing/escaping domestic violence. Despite our best efforts and intentions things can go wrong, and our complaints procedure is there for when you feel we have not achieved the high standard we are committed to. We welcome complaints as a way of putting things right and enabling us to improve our services.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is a report about poor service from us. It may include:

- Unhelpful behaviour or unfair treatment by staff
- Delays or failures to provide a service
- Failure in the quality of the service provided
- Dissatisfaction with policies and procedures

Who can complain?

Our complaints procedure is open to everyone who receives or requests a service from us, including agencies acting on your behalf.

Making a Complaint

Complaints can be made in person, over the phone or in writing. You could also ask a third party to make a complaint on your behalf e.g. The Nottingham Law Centre or a Solicitor.

What we need you to do (the complainant):

Take your time to explain your concerns/complaint and provide specific information to help us determine the appropriate course of action and to start our investigations. You can complete a NCWA complaints form or ask a member of staff to help you fill out the form.

The procedure

Stage 1: We will write to you within 5 days to acknowledge your complaint and let you know who will be investigating. We will include a copy of our full complaints policy and procedure.

Stage 2: The person investigating will make contact with you within 10 days to keep you updated.

Stage 3: We will aim to send a formal response within 21 days.

Stage 4: If you are not satisfied with the outcome then you should ask for your complaint to be investigated. A meeting of no less than 2 senior team members or Board of Trustees members will be organised and you will be invited to this meeting so you, or someone you choose to bring with you to help, can represent your case. You will receive a written response within 7 days of this meeting.

If you have been through our complaints procedure and still remain dissatisfied you can contact: *A solicitor/ Nottingham Law Centre / Citizen's Advice Bureau / Women's Aid Federation of England*



You will not be discouraged from complaining nor treated any less favorably because you have made a complaint. If at any stage however you decide that you do not want to go ahead with your complaint, you should contact a worker to tell them that you wish to withdraw it. You can request a full copy of the complaints procedure and NCWA staff can answer any questions you may have about the policy.

Equality & Fairness

You will not be discouraged from complaining nor treated any less favourably because you have made a complaint. If at any stage you feel victimized because you have made a complaint, you should raise your concerns with the most senior member of staff available.

What if I change my mind?

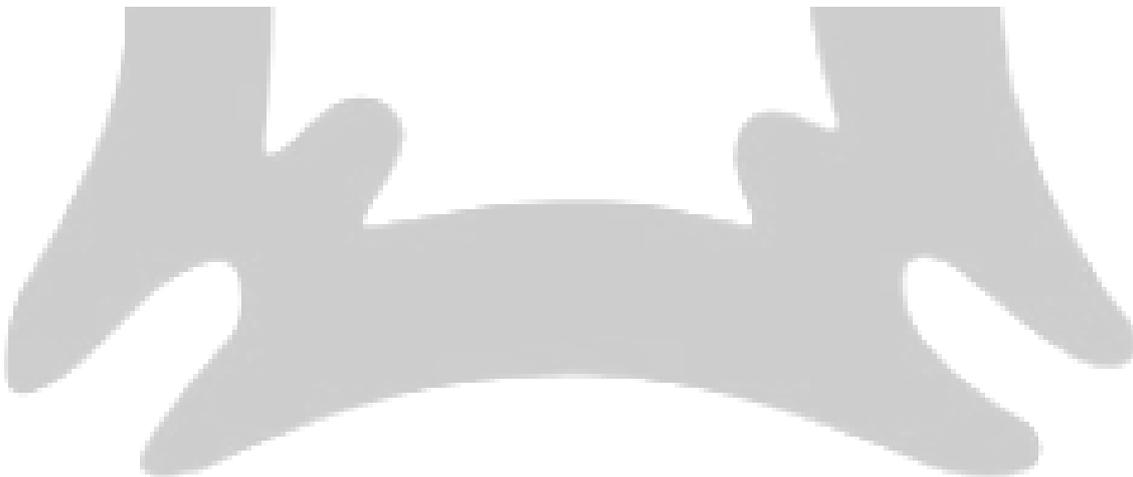
If you decide that you do not want to go ahead with your complaint, you should contact a worker to tell them that you wish to withdraw it. The manager will contact you to confirm that is your decision and record it in the log of complaints.

Relevant legislation:

Data Protection Act 1998,

Equality Act 2010

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974





Complaints Form (To be completed)



1. Name

2. Address and or contact details of complainant or person representing them

3. Nature of complaint Including names/dates and full details