

COMPLAINTS & COMMENTS POLICY

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Revision Table

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INTRODUCTION

This document contains a policy statement (Part One) and procedural guidance (Part Two). The functions of each are set out briefly below.

Part One - Policy Statement.

The policy statement sets out the broad framework of principles within which the particular area of work will be carried out. It sets out the organisation's broad style and approach to the issue, including any aims and guiding principles.

Part Two - Procedural Guidance.

The procedural guidance sets out the detail staff require carrying out their duties in this particular area of work. It also sets out the specific tasks involved in undertaking this area of work and identifies who is responsible for carrying them out.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

To establish the policy and procedure of Calan DVS with regard to complaints and comments from service users and other stakeholders and how these will be used to improve the range and quality of services. There is a separate policy for children and young people.

WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

- Service Users
- Stakeholders

RELEVANT POLICIES

- Employee Wellbeing Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Equality & Diversity
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

1. PART ONE – POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Aims and Principles

Calan DVS seeks to provide a responsive service, to meet the needs of individuals experiencing domestic abuse, and their children.

At all times, Calan DVS welcomes comments and feedback from service users, individuals and organisations about the service they have received, or the services we provide. Feedback and comments will be collated and evaluated, in order to attain, maintain and develop quality service delivery.

- Calan DVS is committed to encouraging service users and stakeholders to come forward with any complaints and comments about the services delivered in order to make sure that quality is protected and service users' needs are appropriately met.
- Calan DVS undertake to monitor all comments and complaints to ensure that they are used to improve the range and quality of service delivery on a continuous basis.
- Calan DVS will also ensure that all service users and stakeholders have access to clear information on how to voice complaints and comments. Service users in particular will be provided with the support they need in order to make their views known. Calan DVS will also

ensure that no service users are disadvantaged or treated less favourably as a result of complaining or making comments.

- Calan DVS will actively encourage service users and external organisations to comment and provide feedback on the services we provide. We will do this in a number of ways:
  - Responding to and recording verbal comments and compliments from individuals in the service provision Comments Log. Each service has a dedicated file within SharePoint, these can be located on the Calan Team Site.
  - Comments/suggestions boxes in all our premises.
  - Encouraging individuals to use the comments/suggestions box.
  - Encouraging all individuals to complete an Exit Survey, upon leaving the refuge/service.
  - Regular House Meetings, where individuals will be encouraged to give us feedback about their experiences of using our services.
  - Evaluation of all formal events, workshops, training sessions, and conferences.
  - Monitoring comments and reporting them regularly to the Leadership Team to ensure we learn from users' comments.
  - Recording, monitoring, and reporting complaints to the Chief Executive.
  - Service users will be enabled to make comments and complaints through a process that meets the needs of the diverse communities we serve. This may include providing translated information, interpretation (including sign language interpretation), and information in alternative formats, where necessary.

2. PART TWO – PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE ON COMPLAINTS & COMMENTS

2.1 Dealing with Complaints and Comments from Service Users

- If an individual wishes to complain or make a comment about the services they are receiving, or any other aspect of their experience whilst being supported by Calan DVS they can do this by speaking with a Support Worker.
- Complaints and comments are generally things which are **about the service.** If a complaint is about the **conduct** of a particular member of staff, it should trigger the disciplinary process if it reflects any of the areas of misconduct listed in that policy. This policy will be followed where appropriate after the service user has put their complaint in writing. They should be advised prior to doing this that if it is about a member of staff it may lead to an investigation under the disciplinary process.
- Should the individual not feel comfortable discussing their complaint with a Support Worker for whatever reason, they can complain to a Line Manager or Senior Member of staff.
- Once an individual wishing to complain has approached a Support Worker, they must first establish if the complaint or comment is a minor matter which can be rectified simply and without conflict. In such cases, there may be no need to seek a written version of the complaint/comment. This should be discussed and agreed with the individual making the complaint/comment. Such cases are most likely to be situations where an individual is requesting a service rather than making a complaint, strictly speaking. However, all complaints/ comments must be recorded in the relevant log, with the action/ resolution taken.
- In cases where the Support Worker has been approached about a more serious issue that is a complaint and not a request for a service, they must establish whether the individual would like assistance in putting their complaint in writing. No pressure should be exerted on them to do this on their own but they can be offered the opportunity to sit down together and record the complaint - the individual giving the details and the Support Worker recording these details and reading them back for confirmation before seeking the individual's signature that what has been recorded is accurate.
- **If** the Support Worker, within the boundaries of their delegated authority, can resolve the complaint they should attempt to do so. However, if the complaint cannot be resolved like this

or the complaint is about staff, the Line Manager or more senior member of staff must lead on resolving the complaint.

- If the complaint is about the line manager or another senior manager the Chief Executive or a Trustee must lead on resolving the complaint.
- Whoever is trying to resolve the complaint, they should follow these guidelines:
  - Get clear information from the individual making the complaint about what went wrong and when. Also ask for their views about how they would like their complaint resolved - i.e. what will fix the problem.
  - Set clear timescales for resolving the complaint and when a response can be made and let the individual know these. In general, this first stage complaint should be resolved in a maximum of 5 working days. Where this is not possible due to complexities then other timescales should be agreed at the outset.
  - If the complaint is the result of a poor service or mistake by Calan DVS this should be rectified immediately and an apology made to the individual.
  - If the complaint is the result of a poor service or mistake by a Housing Association, the member of staff dealing with the complaint must take this up with the Association and agree who will rectify the problem and apologise to the individual.
  - If the complaint is considered unjustified by Calan DVS or the Housing Association, this should be put in writing to the individual, including the reasons why the complaint was not upheld.
- In all cases, a response will be sent to the individual letting them know the outcome of their complaint. They should be told this in writing but should be given support in discussing and understanding the situation with a member of staff to ensure that they feel an acceptable resolution has been found.

2.1.1 If a complaint about a Housing Association remains unresolved

- If, following the above actions, the individual remains dissatisfied with a service which is the direct responsibility of a Housing Association, the member of staff should support them to take their complaint further as specified in the housing association's Complaints policy and procedure.

2.1.2 If a complaint about Calan DVS remains unresolved

- If it has not been possible to achieve a resolution to the individual's complaint that is satisfactory to both their and Calan DVS they should be advised that they can proceed to the next stage of the process if they wish to pursue the matter.
- If the initial complaint was made to a Support Worker but remains unresolved, the client should be advised to contact the Line Manager or a senior manager. If the Line Manager or the Senior Manager has already been involved previously, another Senior Manager or a Trustee must review the complaint. The information they will need to consider within the individual's complaint is:
  - What the problem is
  - What actions have been taken to resolve the problem
  - Why the individual remains dissatisfied
  - What the individual would consider a satisfactory resolution to their complaint
- Once consideration has been made of the individual's complaint, the individuals reviewing the complaint must explain, in writing their decision, including reasons and what the next steps are, if they remain unsatisfied. The individual should be offered the same support as described above in discussing and responding to the decision about their complaint. Timescales for this stage two complaint should be 28 days for giving a written outcome to the individual concerned. If this is not possible then other timescales will be agreed at the outset.

- Should the individual remain dissatisfied following the Senior manager/ Trustee decision with regard to their complaint, they may make a further complaint to either the Housing Association or the Local Supporting People Officer, who will deal with their complaint in line with their policy and procedure on Complaints.

2.2 Complaints from a Service User About Another Service User

- These should be dealt with using the Anti-Social Behaviour and Dispute Resolution Policy.

2.3 Complaints from Staff Members About Other Staff Members

- Staff members should use the Grievance Procedure in cases where they have a complaint about the behaviour of either a colleague or the Line Manager.

2.4 Dealing with Comments and Complaints from Stakeholders

- The procedure for dealing with complaints and comments from stakeholders will follow the steps set out above, except that these complaints and comments should be addressed to the Chief Executive of Calan DVS or the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- If they are dissatisfied, they should be informed that they may pursue the complaint further with the Supporting People Officer in their Local Authority area.

2.5 Dealing with Complaints from Alleged Perpetrators

- Any complaint from an alleged perpetrator **will not be addressed**, support workers must simply state that we cannot confirm a service users' engagement with the service.

2.6 Monitoring Complaints and Comments and Using Feedback to Improve Services

- Each time a complaint or comment is made in writing, it should be recorded in the complaints record by the member of staff who receives it and is dealing with it.
- The content of this record will be fed into the following systems and processes:
    - Annual business planning, particularly in terms of:
        - Identifying and prioritising changes and improvements to existing services Identifying gaps in service provision
    - Service reviews (timing will be dependent on the cycle of review)
    - Reviews of policies and procedures
- The content of the complaints record should also be reported to:
    - The Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis
    - Leadership team on a monthly basis
    - Service user participation groups on at least an annual basis
    - The relevant service commissioner on an annual basis
    - The refuge landlord on an annual basis

2.7 If A Complaint Remains Unsolved

- If a complainant is not satisfied with the result of the investigation and notification, they have the option of making a complaint to the local Supporting People Officer or the Housing Association as the Landlord.
- Contact details for the relevant individuals will be provided to the complainant.

Policy Ratification

Ratified by:	Owain Jones
Signature:	
Position:	Board Member
Date:	5th December 2024
Next review date:	5th December 2027

APPENDIX 1

Calan DVS Complaints Leaflet

Calan DVS seeks to provide a responsive service, to meet the needs of individuals and children experiencing domestic violence. Our mission statement is:

"Working together to end domestic violence and abuse"

If you have a complaint about any aspect of our service or the behaviour/ actions of another resident or a staff member, please speak to your key worker, to try and resolve the matter swiftly.

If your complaint is about another resident in refuge, and you have tried to resolve the problem yourself but the problem is not resolved, or if you would prefer to make a written complaint, please complete the form below, put it in an envelope, and give it to your Key Worker. If your complaint is about a member of staff, please put it in an envelope addressed to the Team Leader or Area Service Manager and give it to a member of staff. If you do not wish to do this, you may send in your complaint directly to the Team Leader or Area Service Manager to the following address: -

Calan DVS
17 Victoria Gardens
Neath
SA11 3AY

You can also email your complaint to: enquiries@calandvs.org.uk

In addition, the contact details of the person responsible for complaints and compliments can be found on the notice board in each of our premises.

Your Support Worker (or the Line Manager) will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receipt; they will then investigate and inform you of the outcome, in writing, within 15 working days of receipt.

You may also be invited to a meeting to discuss your complaint or invited to participate in mediation if your complaint is about another service user. In all cases you have the right of appeal if you are still not satisfied with how we have responded to your complaint.

Further details of our complaints and appeals procedure can be found within our Complaints and Comments Policy.

IF YOU NEED HELP COMPLETING THIS FORM, PLEASE LET US KNOW.

APPENDIX 2

Individual Record of Complaint and/or Comment

Date Complaint / Comment Received:	
Name and Position of person handling complaint/comment:	
Type of Complaint:	
Services Provided by Calan DVS	
Complaint/Comment about an existing Calan DVS Service. Please state which service:	
Complaint/Comment about a gap in Calan DVS' service. Please state what the gap is:	
Services Provided by a Housing Association	
Complaint/comment about the repairs service. Please give details:	
Complaint/Comment about another Housing Association Service. Please give details:	
Complaint/Comment about a member of HA staff. Please state the nature of the issue:	

What Stage did the complaint/comment reach? *Make any pertinent notes in space below:*	Support Worker
	Line Manager / Director
	Board of Trustees
	Housing Association (as next stage)
	Supporting People Officer
Record any changes which have been made to policies, procedures or working practices as a result of the complaint/comment:	
Do any issues need to go forward to service reviews or business planning? If so, state what these are:	
Name:	
Position:	
Date:	