

Tyneside Welcomes Complaints policy and procedures

Tyneside Welcomes views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the individual that has made the complaint.

What is this policy for?

Our policy is:

1. To make it easy for a resettled refugee to report a complaint
2. To provide a fair and timely complaints procedure
3. To make sure everyone providing resettlement support knows what to do if a complaint is received
4. To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
5. To gather information which helps us to improve on the services provided as part of the sponsorship agreement

What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of care provided as part of the sponsorship agreement.

This will include complaints about:

- The people who are responsible for providing direct support to the family placed in the care of Tyneside Welcomes
- The quality of the support received
- Other service providers (e.g. relating to accommodation, interpreters, medical or English Language tuition providers)
- This will exclude complaints made by:
 - Volunteers (these would be part of the Code of Conduct for Volunteers)
 - Other service providers
 - Members of the public

It does not include complaints by members of the resettled family about other members of their family, which would be dealt with through the Safeguarding Policy.

Who can make a complaint?

Complaints may come from any member of the resettled family placed in the care of the sponsoring group. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. This policy is strictly for complaints from members of a resettled family and does not cover complaints from volunteers or staff providing resettlement care.

How are details of a complaint handled?

All complaint information will be handled sensitively and with care and confidentiality, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Complaints Procedure

How should a complaint be made?

Verbal Complaint

A verbal complaint should be made at the earliest opportunity to the nominated complaints officer, Sally Mitchison.

If this is not possible or is inappropriate to do so due to the nature of the complaint, the complainant should contact Richard Young as Lead Sponsor.

Telephone Complaint

A telephone complaint should be made at the earliest opportunity by calling the nominated complaints officer, Sally Mitchison on 07972 201964. These details are also included in the family Welcome Pack. If this is not possible or is inappropriate to do so due to the nature of the complaint, the complainant should contact Richard Young as Lead Sponsor on 07913 506189.

Written Complaint

A complaint should be made in writing, at the earliest opportunity via email to mitchison@blueyonder.co.uk or by letter to the following address:

Dr Sally Mitchison,
46, West Lane
Forest Hall
Newcastle upon Tyne NE12 7BE

How should a complaint be responded to?

Complaints received verbally or by telephone should be written down immediately, and a secure record kept. The person receiving the complaint should:

1. Record the complainant's name, address and contact telephone number
2. Write down the facts of the complaint
3. Remind the complainant of the Complaints Procedure
4. Advise the complainant what will happen next and give an idea of timescales
5. If possible, and where appropriate, ask the complainant to follow up by providing a written account of the complaint in their own words

Complaints will receive an initial response by telephone within 24 hours or by the next working day. This should be followed by a written response, including all the above as well as the name and contact details of the person assigned to handle the complaint.

Resolving a complaint

- i) In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the person receiving the complaint feels they may be able to resolve the complaint swiftly they should do so if possible and appropriate.
- ii) Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to TW's Complaints Officer, Sally Mitchison, within 48 hours.

- iii) On receiving the complaint, TW's Complaints Officer, Sally Mitchison, records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they will delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.
- iv) Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within 48 hours. 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
- v) If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair and timely opportunity to respond as part of any investigation.
- vi) Ideally complainants should receive a definitive written reply within 10 working days. 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.
- vii) 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.
- viii) If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved, they can ask for the complaint to be *escalated*.

Responding to an escalated complaint

If the complainant feels their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved following the initial investigation, they can request it is escalated. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to Lindsay Brigham, who will be responsible for handling escalated complaints.

The request for escalation, by email or by telephone to Lindsay Brigham (lindsayb222@gmail.com and 07711 022627) should be acknowledged within 48 hours of receiving it.

The designated person should acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing and advise the complainant how their appeal will be handled.

The designated person may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the initial complaint.

The same process outlined in v) – vii) above should be followed.

Any individuals who dealt with the original complaint should be kept informed and given ample opportunity to explain the reasons for the original decision.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

Any three Trustees may make a decision for external resolution. Resolution will be sought from the North Tyneside Voluntary Organisation Development Agency, VODA (<https://voda.org.uk/>)

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Lead Sponsor, Richard Young, may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a person who is responsible for reviewing a complaint.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

The complaints Officer will make sure that the Trustees receive a report on all complaints received at least every three months. Where appropriate, a brief summary will also be reported to the Co-ordinating Committee.

Complaints are reviewed every six months by Trustees to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Language Translation

A copy of this complaints policy is made available to the resettled family in their own first language. This will be included as part of their welcome pack provided on their arrival at their new home.

Translation into the appropriate language is also provided, as necessary, both for the complaint itself and for subsequent communications during the complaint process, including the final response.

Who is responsible for this policy?

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the lead sponsor, Richard Young.

Policy Approved by: Richard Young, Lead Sponsor of Tyneside Welcomes and the Trustees of Tyneside Welcomes

Date of Approval: 26 October 2020

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Policy Reviewed: 21 July 2021

Next review date: July 2022