

# Customer Feedback Policy & Procedure

## 1. Introduction

RNIB is committed to providing the best possible service to our customers. Critical to this is ensuring that customers can feedback on the service they have received and we respond in a helpful and flexible way to what the customer needs. Feedback is welcome to help improve services and standards.

- The handling of customer feedback (complaints, compliments and comments) has a direct bearing on the public image of RNIB and its Board of Trustees.
- All customer feedback will receive an automated acknowledgment within 1 working day and dealt with, within 20 working days.
- Complainants should be dealt with promptly, sympathetically and constructively; it is important that every complainant should feel that their complaint has been dealt with appropriately, with courtesy, fairness and respect. It is the customer who determines whether their query has been responded to satisfactorily.
- Feedback should be directed to the appropriate team, for action, recording, communication. Trend data should be gathered as part of business intelligence for organisational development.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to set out the procedure on how feedback, in particular, complaints relating to all RNIB business activity (e.g. services, solutions, events, fundraising), should be dealt with by staff, in order to reflect the objective of improving the services offered to customers.

## 3. Scope

All workers (staff and volunteers) are responsible for enacting the policy and procedures outlined.

## 4. Review

This policy is due for review in one year's time on 1st December 2018 or earlier following any relative legislative changes.

## 5. Definitions and Feedback channels

**Comment** – A suggestion or thought about a product, service or experience, perhaps an improvement that could be made.

**Compliment** – A positive review of a product, service or experience had with RNIB

**Complaint** – An expression (oral or written) of dissatisfaction of a product, service or experience requiring a response.

We welcome comments, compliments and complaints about the quality and nature of their experience with RNIB. It is important to ensure that feedback is referred to the relevant service(s) as soon as possible, to avoid delay in responding to the customer. Sometimes we may receive comments from customers which may be positive or negative but don't require response. This is customer feedback which should be acknowledged as a minimum.

Customers can direct their feedback:

- To the service officer (in the case of care homes and/or to the relevant Regulator) their feedback is concerned with. This will often mean the feedback is dealt with more quickly, especially if it is a complaint
- Via the Helpline on 0303 123 9999 or email [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)
- Via [feedback@rnib.org.uk](mailto:feedback@rnib.org.uk)
- Via social media such as Facebook and Twitter

We are committed to communicating with our customers in ways they find accessible.

## **6. Handling positive feedback**

Compliments and comments will be shared with the staff and volunteers who delivered the service to ensure continued quality service standards and contribute to future developments that meet customer needs. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to use *ASCENT* to share positive feedback with the team and managers to assist the development of customer service standards and training, as part of the Customer Change Programme. The recording of positive feedback is important so that it can be shared, celebrated and rewarded through staff recognition.

## **7. Handling complaints**

Resolving complaints as close as possible to the point of service delivery means we can deal with them locally and quickly. Where possible we will deal with and correct any errors as soon as possible and, if appropriate, apologise quickly. This encourages customers to keep using our services and helps us to learn lessons and improve our services. In responding to complaints, we will comply with all specific regulatory requirements that apply to specific services such as our education and care services.

We will assure our customers that if they tell us something is wrong we will:

- Aim to resolve any complaint as soon as possible and within the time frames set out in this policy
- Explain our complaints process in plain English, Welsh or in a language of the customer's choice (where possible/ appropriate/subject to regulatory requirements)

- Tell the right people in the organisation and keep a copy of the customer feedback so that improvements can be made where they need to be
- Inform customers what action has been taken and progress made.

If the customer prefers a more 'informal approach' at stage 1, such as a phone call or brief discussion, we will do this.

Each team is responsible for ensuring that any decisions and outcomes are also passed on to staff as well as customers. Teams are also responsible for keeping accurate records of all feedback received and actions taken, and reviewing these regularly to identify trends to drive improvements.

## **8. Complaints procedure**

There are three stages. Deviation from the usual procedure this should be explained and agreed with both the customer and the relevant CMT/Director. It is advisable for a complaint to be handled by one individual within each stage so the customer has one point of contact.

### **8.1. Stage 1**

Stage 1 complaints are handled by the Helpline (or if received via a route other than the Helpline, it should be passed to the relevant Service Manager) who will endeavour to deal with the complaint in its entirety, log it and report back to the relevant manager. The Helpline, Service Manager or other nominee should follow the following steps at stage:

- Acknowledge a complaint within one working day of receipt.
- Assess the nature of the issue
- Consider if the complaint is a safeguarding issue - if so, take action using the Safeguarding Policy = becomes a stage 2
- Ask the customer what outcome they would like to achieve
- Respond sensitively to the complainant and, if possible, resolve the complaint straight away and followed up in writing
- If the complaint cannot be dealt with immediately, explain to the customer what process we will take and when it will be resolved.

All complaints, resolutions, referrals must be logged, regardless of timeframes, to provide data for improvement. Specific feedback on individual staff /volunteers will be directed to the individuals, with any appropriate action taken in line with HR policies.

Within the regulated services such as our care homes, a record of 'low level' issues and comments is kept within the service. We will aim to resolve these issues within the local management team and a record will be reflected in the team's monthly meetings.

If it cannot be resolved at stage 1, or if the complainant is dissatisfied with our response, it should be referred to stage 2.

## **8.2. Stage 2**

Stage 2 complaints are dealt with by the relevant Head of Service, service managers, Director or Country Director (or an appropriate nominee). If the complainant asks for an 'independent' person to investigate, provision should be made to enable this to happen.

A complaint should be escalated to stage 2 when any of the following occur:

- The complaint raised is complex, serious, high-risk or high-profile issues, requiring detailed investigation
- The customer refuses to take part in the frontline resolution process or it was tried but the customer remains dissatisfied /requests further action
- the complaint is about the individual or Service Manager who dealt with the initial stage
- There is a safeguarding concern.

A full investigation (building on points captured at Stage 2,) and resolution will be sought within 20 working days, with written outcome (s) to the complainant. The outcome will be communicated to relevant staff and volunteers so that any recommended action can be taken to address the customer's concerns.

## **8.3. Stage 3**

If the customer remains dissatisfied with the resolution at stage 2, they can ask for a review within 3 months of the notification of outcome of stage 2.

It will be the responsibility of the relevant Director (or their nominee) to handle the final stage review and ensure a suitable and appropriate process for the review is agreed with the customer and followed. Unless circumstances make it inappropriate, this review should be conducted in partnership with a customer representative, drawn from the Customer Council.

All investigations should take place and resolved within 20 working days<sup>1</sup>. Matters will be documented. The decision to whether to uphold, partially uphold or not uphold the outcomes from the previous investigation of the complaint (and any further actions required) will be communicated by the Director/nominee and confirmed in writing to the complainant. Relevant staff/ volunteers will be informed of the outcome for service improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> In exceptional circumstances, there may be a need to extend the timeframe; this will be communicated to the complainant and a weekly progress update provided

#### **8.4. Appeals, post stage 3**

If the customer remains dissatisfied with the complaint or the way in which it was handled, then they have the right to contact the external regulator, being the Charity Commission (England and Wales); the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland; or, in Scotland, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). For educational establishments or services regulated by the Care Quality Commission or Scottish Care Inspectorate, there are specific requirements which must be complied with.

#### **9. Inappropriate feedback**

RNIB takes intimidating or threatening behaviour against its staff and volunteers seriously and does not tolerate inappropriate behaviour towards its staff, volunteers or any associated workers. Any worker who harassment, intimidation or threatening behaviour from a customer or complainant should inform their line manager immediately and comprehensive records of the interaction(s) should be kept.

Guidance for face-to-face, telephone, email and postal services on how to deal with challenging behaviour is available as a separate supporting document.

#### **10. Toolkit**

- Safeguarding Policy
- Guidance on responding to challenging behavior.

#### **11. Version, Approved and Implementation Dates**

Version: 3

Reviewed: December 2017

Next Review: December 2018

Agreed by: Executive

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