

# Customer Feedback Policy & Procedure

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

## 1 Introduction

- 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 one working day and dealt with within 20 working days.
- Complainants should be dealt with promptly, constructively and with empathy; it is important that every complainant should feel that his or her complaint has been dealt with appropriately, with courtesy, fairness and respect.
- 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. A list of data fields to capture on the relevant systems is provided in Annex One below.
- RNIB's Service Promises set the high expectations by which we aim to deliver any service or customer interaction from all areas of the organisation. Our Service Promises are:

### 1. **We make it easy**

We make it easy to interact with us. We'll provide information in accessible and easy-to-use formats and help you use technology in ways that work for you.

### 2. **We make it all about you**

We'll always listen first and connect on your terms. We want to be there at the times that matter and whenever you need us again.

### 3. **We know our stuff but keep it simple**

We offer impartial, reliable and relevant advice and information that's clear and simple, so you can decide on the best next steps for you.

### 4. **We connect you to all the options**

We connect you to support from other organisations and community groups, as well as RNIB. We'll offer you choices that keep you in control over the services you use and the involvement you would like to have.

### 5. **We invite you to be part of something bigger**

We want as many people as possible to contribute to making every day better for people affected by sight loss. We'll invite you to stay in touch, connect with others and campaign for change.

The involvement and leadership of blind and partially sighted people is integrated into the handling of feedback through:

- The Customer Involvement Advisory Group reviewing complaints data and providing feedback as to how business areas are involving blind and partially sighted people in designing services and developing staff understanding of customers' diverse contexts and perspectives.
- The Customer Involvement Advisory Group providing scrutiny to actions taken as result of customer feedback.
- Our Service Promises were written in collaboration with customers, Connect community members, and staff.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to set out the procedure on how feedback 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 2019 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 customer 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:

- Via the Helpline on 0303 123 9999 or email [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)
- Via social media such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Note that where RNIB offers a platform for online community engagement, such as a Facebook group, the Online Community Engagement Policy applies.
- To the service officer the feedback is concerned with (for example at RNIB's Care and Education establishments the first point of contact is usually staff within that particularly service). This will often mean the feedback is dealt with more quickly, especially if it is a complaint.

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 to contribute to future developments that meet customer needs. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to use the Ascent system and Workplace by Facebook to share positive feedback to assist the development of customer service standards. The recording of positive feedback is important so that it can be shared, celebrated and rewarded through staff recognition. Staff and volunteers are required to follow RNIB's Data Protection Policy at all times and should anonymise customer details accordingly when sharing positive feedback.

## **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 apologise quickly for any error and their impact to the customer. 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 one, 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 should be explained and agreed with both the customer and the relevant CMT/Director. It is advisable that a complaint is handled by one individual within each stage so the customer has one point of contact.

### **8.1. Stage One**

A Stage One complaint is usually handled by the Helpline (or if received via a route other than the Helpline, it should be passed to the relevant Service Manager (for example at a Care / Education establishment) 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 which takes precedence, and the complaint automatically moves to Stage Two.
- Ask the customer what outcome they would like to achieve.
- Respond sensitively to the complainant and, if possible, resolve the complaint straight away.

- Follow up in writing when appropriate.
- If the complaint cannot be dealt with immediately, explain to the customer what process we will take and when it will be resolved. Where information is required from another team, they are obliged to provide this to the best of their knowledge within the expectations set with the customer (usually two working days).

All complaints, resolutions and 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, records of complaints should be kept within the service and reported centrally on a monthly basis. 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 One, or if the complainant is dissatisfied with our response, it should be referred to Stage Two.

## **8.2. Stage Two**

A Stage Two complaint is dealt with by the relevant Head of Service, service manager, or an appropriate nominee. If the complainant asks for an 'independent' person to investigate, provision should be made to enable this to happen. This will usually be a colleague from a different area of the organisation.

A complaint should be escalated to Stage Two when any of the following occur:

- The complaint raised is complex, serious, high-risk or a high-profile issue, requiring detailed investigation
- The customer does not want 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, in which case the Safeguarding Policy takes precedence.

A full investigation (building on points captured at Stage Two,) 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 Three**

If the customer remains dissatisfied with the resolution at Stage Two, he or she can ask for a review within three months of the notification of outcome of Stage Two.

- 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.

All investigations should take place and should be resolved within 20 working days<sup>1</sup>. Matters will be documented. The decision as 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.

### **8.4. Appeals, post Stage Three**

If the customer remains dissatisfied with the outcome of 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 is subject to 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.

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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 regular progress update provided

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
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Guidance on responding to challenging behavior
- Online Community Engagement Policy
- Annex 1: List of mandatory fields for recording customer feedback

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

Version: 3

Reviewed: December 2018

Next Review: December 2019

Agreed by: Operational Delivery Group and Executive Leadership Team

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### **Annex 1: List of mandatory fields for recording customer feedback**

The BI/CX team have offered to support any business area that does not currently have the mechanism to record customer feedback effectively. Below are the proposed mandatory fields that should be recorded

- Date received.
- Status (Open – within SLA, Open – outside SLA, Resolved)
- Stage (1,2 or 3)
- Date resolved.
- Customer details (name, address, phone number, email address, social media IDs)
- Customer contact preference
- Name of staff member accountable for responding to the feedback.
- Summary of customer feedback
- Category of feedback (list to be determined by service area – to include Safeguarding concern as a category)
- Links or file paths to all customer communications, including letters and emails.