

Project5 Complaints Policy

1 Purpose of this Policy

1.1 Project5 is committed to providing a good service to its service users, other stakeholders and other people and organisations with whom it comes into contact.

1.2 The aim of this Policy is to give clear guidelines and understanding to all Project5 staff, Trustees, volunteers, supporters, and service users about the Project5 Complaints Policy.

1.3 This Policy is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently, in a timely manner and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. 1.4 In order to continue to improve the services of the Project5 this Policy will identify means by which upheld complaints result in changes to practices or procedures.

2. Background

2.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, with the services of the Project5, with a member of staff, volunteer, or director and that requires a formal response.

2.2 This is different from a grievance which relates to a complaint made by a member of staff and volunteer or director which are dealt with in accordance with the Project5 Grievance Policy.

3. Relevant Regulations and Procedures

3.1 Complaints about Project5

3.2 Annex 1: Procedures for dealing with Complaints – Advice to Complainants

4. General Policy

4.1 Project5 aims to resolve complaints quickly, fairly, and effectively. The Project5 accepts that one of the ways it can improve its services is to listen and respond to the views of service users, partners and others who come into contact with the Project5. In particular, by responding positively to complaints and by putting mistakes right. We aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible.

- We treat any complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction which calls for a timely response.
- We deal with it promptly, politely, and when appropriate confidentially.
- We will respond in the correct way – for example, with an explanation, or an apology or information on any action taken.

We will learn from complaints and use them to improve services that we offer.

5. Responsibilities of Project5 In dealing with complaints the Chief Executive or the Deputy Chief Executive will:

- 5.1 Identify an appropriate member of the team to investigate the complaint.
- 5.2 Acknowledge the receipt of each formal complaint in writing within 10 working days of receipt, with the exception of announced closure periods.
- 5.3 Provide the complainant with a copy of this Complaints Policy.
- 5.4 Independently investigate any complaint made.
- 5.5 Provide a detailed, written response to the complainant within 21 working days of receipt of the complaint.
- 5.6 Take appropriate action based upon the findings of the investigation of the complaint.
- 5.7 Ensure that the Chief Executive or the Acting Chief Executive has authorised both the detailed written response and any action identified under 5.5 and 5.6 above.
- 5.8 Maintain adequate records including a Complaints Register.

6. Complainants are required to:

- 6.1 Raise their concern promptly and directly with the person concerned and if the concern cannot be resolved informally then to follow this formal Complaints Procedure as detailed in Annex 1.
- 6.2 Explain the issue as clearly and as fully as possible.
- 6.3 Allow Project5 a reasonable amount of time to investigate and report its findings.

7. Learning From Complaints

7.1 Project5 acknowledges that any formal complaint, whether upheld or not, may identify issues which require remediation. Examples may include:-

- The need for additional staff/volunteer training either specific to an individual or to staff/volunteers more widely.

- The need to change the Project5 policies, procedures, or practices.
- The need to amend the Project5 literature or website.

7.2 As part of the investigation of a complaint the staff member/volunteer charged with undertaking it will document, in writing, any areas where lessons can be learnt. Recommendations will be made to the Board as to how these may be actioned, no later than 28 days (excluding closure periods) after the complaint has been resolved.

8. Complaints Relating to Vulnerable Adults and Children

8.1 Complaints received in respect of vulnerable adults or children will be dealt with in line with the guidelines of this Policy. However, in acknowledgement of the additional sensitivities which may pertain to these groups of persons, more stringent processes with regard to timeframes and responsibilities have been adopted.

8.2 These processes are detailed in the Project5 Safeguarding policies for Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults (see the page on the Project5 website) and concerns should be raised by contacting the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** via support@project5.org.

9. Updating this Policy

9.1 It is the responsibility of the Board to keep this policy updated as necessary.

9.2 Any material changes to the policy will be subject to the approval of the Board.

9.3 Notwithstanding the above this policy will be subject to re-approval by the Board every 3 years.

Approved by Board: February 2022

Date for review: February 2024

Annex 1

Procedures for dealing with Complaints: Advice to Complainants

1. Procedures 1.1 STEP 1 – INITIATING A COMPLAINT

1.1.1 If you have a complaint, you should usually first talk to anyone directly involved. At this stage you may wish to informally discuss your complaint with the staff member/volunteer involved in dealing with the issue (or another Project5 team member if your complaint concerns the member of staff/volunteer in question) to try to get the issue resolved.

1.1.2 At this informal stage a Project5 team member can also be involved. If you'd like involvement from the team, please make a request via support@project5.org. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of these informal discussions, then you can follow the formal complaints procedure.

1.2 STEP 2 - MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT

1.2.1 Put the complaint in writing

A formal complaint must be in writing. The written complaint should be addressed to the **Complaints Officer** via support@project5.org. The **Complaints Officer** will let you know within 10 working days who will deal with your complaint.

1.2.2 Investigation

The person nominated to deal with your complaint can discuss the complaint with you, anyone else concerned and, if appropriate, convene a meeting between you and the person(s) involved in the complaint.

1.2.3 Decision

The person dealing with your complaint will come to a decision on whether to uphold your complaint and if so, any appropriate action that will be taken. A written record of this will be given to you. The complaint will be dealt with within 28 working days of the complaint being received by the person nominated to deal with it. If the matter cannot be resolved in this time period, the complainant will be informed of the delay and the reasons for the delay.

1.2.4 Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the decision you can appeal against it, in writing, to the Board within four weeks of receiving the written decision. The Board will review the process by which the decision was

reached and the proposed action arising from the decision. If the process or decision was found not to be in line with Project5 policy then the complaint can be reinvestigated. A written response to you and all concerned will be made in writing within four weeks of receiving the written appeal.

1.2.5 No further appeal can be made.

1.3 MONITORING COMPLAINTS

1.3.1 All formal complaints received and the progress in resolving them will be recorded in a Complaints Register.

1.3.1 The Board will be informed of all complaints, and this will be recorded in meeting minutes and any necessary action will then be confirmed or set in motion.

1.4 HELP IN MAKING A COMPLAINT

1.4.1 When making a formal complaint it may be useful to have an advocate. This person, of your choice, can support you to put your case effectively. They can be any person e.g. a friend or a member of an advocacy organisation.

Project5 (registered Project5 1164250 England & Wales, SC047223 Scotland CIO)

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