

A decorative graphic in the top left corner consisting of several curved, overlapping lines in shades of blue and red, similar to the Improving Lives logo.

Complaints Policy

Improving Lives is committed to providing excellent support to the people who use our service.

Whilst the organisation strives to provide appropriate and high quality services it is accepted that on occasions things can go wrong. If this happens Improving Lives staff would like to be informed of the problems so that they have the opportunity to put things right.

Service users and their carers are encouraged to work with front line staff to resolve problems as this is often the best way forward.

Because feedback is valued Improving Lives has a policy to invite comments about the service whether this is a complaint, compliment or even a suggestion because this is seen as a way of continually improving the service. The feedback received is monitored and recorded. The board of Trustees have oversight of the comments made during board meetings which take place every 6 weeks. The information gathered is then used to review the services and we aim to let people know how their views have been used to improve the service.

The aim of Improving Lives is to:

- Take complaints seriously and try to resolve these wherever possible
- Use complaints and feedback to help improve our service
- Learn from our mistakes
- Provide responses which are clear and easy to understand
- Provide where necessary, explanations for decisions
- Treat people fairly and with respect
- Be open and honest
- Maintain confidentiality

Complaints

There is no one definition of a complaint. Improving Lives sees a complaint where a person who uses the service, or carer expresses dissatisfaction with the way the workers have acted, particularly where an initial response to the problem has not proven satisfactory.

For example a complaint could be where:

- The service has not followed a published policy or procedure
- We have failed to deliver or meet an expected standard of service
- Our staff or volunteers/associates have been unhelpful or acted in an inappropriate manner

There are certain issues that cannot be dealt with through this particular procedure although Improving Lives will always listen and provide a response.

The Complaints procedure is designed to deal with complaints about the service Improving Lives offers. If for example the complaint is about health or social care services this policy and procedure could not be used.

Where complaints are about a policy or the published timescales in which Improving Lives aims to do things, the procedure attached cannot be used. However, feedback is encouraged so that the organisation is aware that the services have not met expectations.

Complaints Procedure

How to make a Complaint

If you feel you need to make a complaint it is important that you contact us and tell us:-

- What the complaint is
- When it happened
- What you have done about it
- Who you reported it to and who has been involved
- How you would like it resolved

Complaints can be made:-

- To any member of staff when you see them.
- By requesting an appointment for a staff member to meet you
- By telephone
- In writing
- By e-mail to the CEO: kerry@improvinglivesnotts.org.uk

(Where complaints are made in person you will be asked some questions and notes will be taken. You will then be told what happens next.)

We would encourage you to let us know your complaint as soon as possible but do ask that you complain within 6 months of the issue first arising.

Our Complaints Procedure

We believe that the majority of problems can be sorted out by discussing the issues with the relevant members of staff and we encourage you to do this. Where this has not resolved your problem or for some reason you do not wish to discuss your complaint at this level we understand that you may wish to take things further.

If this happens you should write to us. There are 3 stages to our complaints procedure:

1. Review by the CEO or Board Member.
2. Review by the Chair of the Board. You should advise us why you remain dissatisfied and advise us what you would like to happen to resolve your complaint.
3. Review by the Board who will receive a report on your complaint including copies of the information you have sent in. You will be invited along with a friend or representative to meet with the Board to discuss your complaint.

Timescales

We understand that it is important for you to have your complaint resolved as quickly as possible.

At each stage we will provide a response within 10 working days. In our reply, to avoid any further delays we will also provide you with details of what to do next and a named person to contact if you still remain unhappy.

At stage 3, a meeting with the Board will be arranged within 28 working days. This is to allow time for the report to be completed and arrangements made for a minimum of 3 Board Members to attend.

The maximum time for a complaint to be dealt with from stage 1 to stage 3 is 8 weeks.

Independent Ombudsman

If your complaint has reached stage 3 of our procedure and you are still not happy with the response, there are no further stages of appeal. In this situation, where the above process has been exhausted and the complaint has not been resolved, the Charity Commission can be contacted to take your complaint further:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>