



# WELLBEING SCOTLAND

**TITLE:** Complaints procedure  
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**APPROVED BY:** *(Signature)* Shelly McGee, Treasurer

## **SERVICE USER COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE**

Wellbeing Scotland is committed to providing high quality support for all service users. One of the ways in which we aim to continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our service users. We aim to respond positively to all complaints, thereby ensuring that any negative aspects of our service are unrepeated. Therefore we aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a considered response within the time frames set out in this policy;
- we deal with it promptly, politely and in accordance with our confidentiality policy;
- we respond appropriately - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
- we learn from complaints and use them to improve our service

The complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

### **Definition**

Wellbeing Scotland defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with Wellbeing Scotland, with a member of staff or volunteer, or with a Wellbeing Scotland Board member) that relates to Wellbeing Scotland and that requires a formal response'.

### **Access To Complaints Procedure**

This complaints procedure is available from all Wellbeing Scotland offices, is referred to in client information and there is a poster in all offices outlining how to complain. Information can be provided in an accessible format to those with visual impairments and where required in different languages. Where assistance is required we can access an external advocate for you.

## **COSCA**

We adhere to COSCA ethical guidelines and you can make a complaint to COSCA about any access of our services by contacting them on 01786 475140 or accessing the process through the COSCA website <http://www.cosca.org.uk>. The COSCA address is at the end of this document. The ***Report to COSCA at Conclusion of Complaints Proceedings*** will be submitted to COSCA.

### **Timescales**

Complaints must be submitted within a year of the situation being complained about. Due to the short term nature of charity funding staff in the service may move on and this will enable us to investigate fully.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

Anonymous complaints will be presented to the Board of Directors for investigation and the complaint will be held in the complaints log.

### **Wellbeing Scotland's responsibility will be to:**

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within the period of time stated below;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- take action where appropriate.

### **A complainant's responsibility is to:**

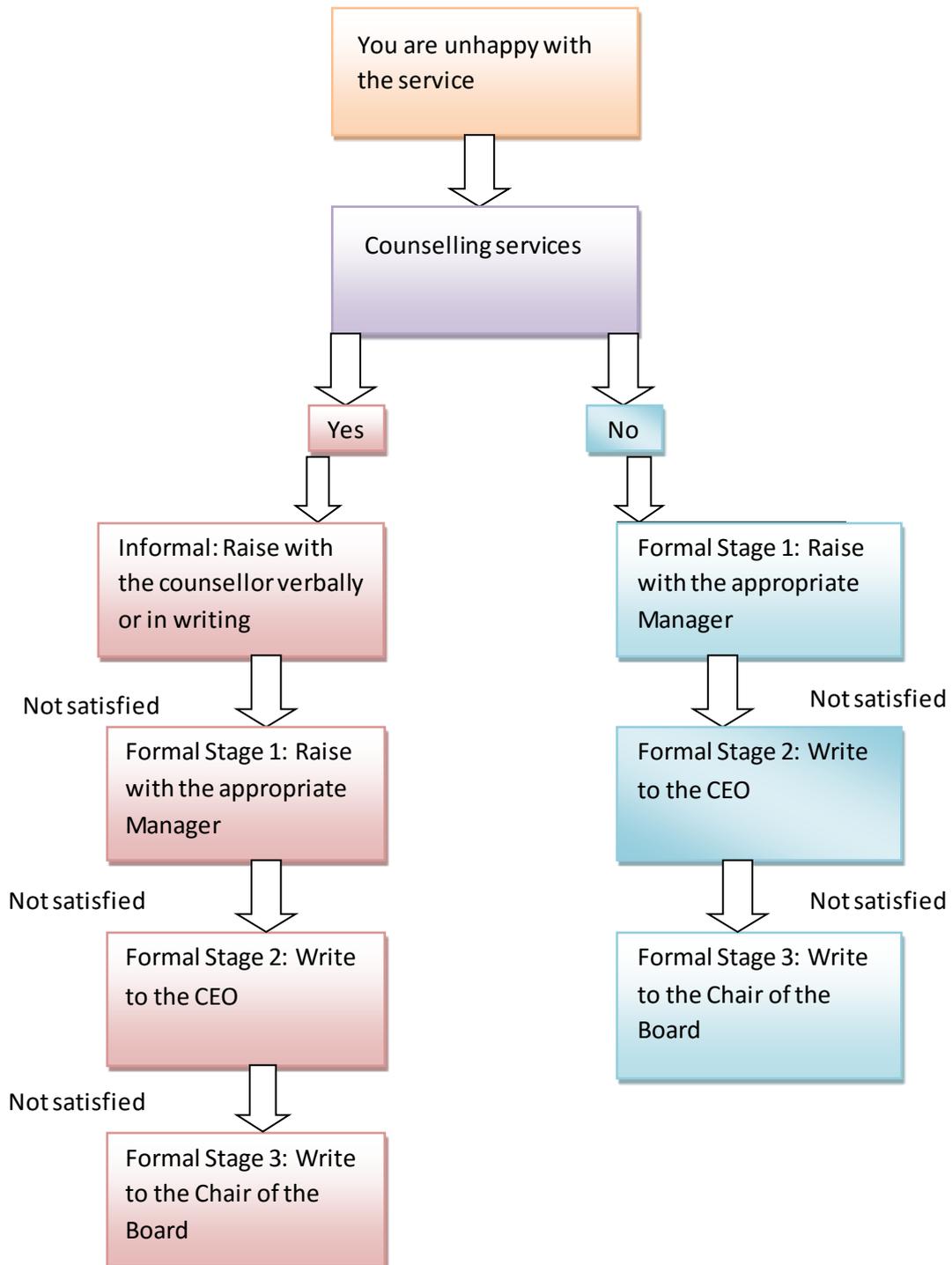
- bring their complaint, in writing, to Wellbeing Scotland's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising but prior to the year timescale outlined above;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with the appropriate service manager who will be responsible for any further action;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow Wellbeing Scotland to deal with the matter within the time frames specified below;
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Wellbeing Scotland's control. The maximum time to consider a complaint and provide a response will be 12 weeks.

### **Third Parties**

Complaints are acceptable from defined third parties and/or representatives. A defined third party refers to an appropriately authorised third party e.g. personal tutor, social workers, and legal guardians who can bring a complaint on behalf of a minor and/or an adult lacking capacity.

## Monitoring and Reporting

Board members of Wellbeing Scotland will receive annually an anonymous report of complaints made and their resolution.



## **Formal Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1**

You should write to the relevant manager of the service. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

Where there is a conflict of interest then a different manager of or member of the board will carry out the investigation.

You should mark your letter 'Formal Complaint' and send it by post to:  
98 Thornhill Road, Falkirk, FK2 7AB  
Or by email to:  
info@opensecret.org

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within 25 working days.

### **Stage 2**

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint then you can write to Wellbeing Scotland's Chief Executive at the postal or email address above and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect the Chief Executive to acknowledge your request within 10 working days of receipt as it may need to be forwarded on and a response within 28 working days.

Wellbeing Scotland's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

Where there is a conflict of interest then a different manager of or member of the board will carry out the investigation.

### **Stage 3 Appeal Stage**

If you are not satisfied you can write to the Chair of the Board and they will implement a full investigation of the issues presented and the evidence gathered at each of the previous stages.

Where there is a conflict of interest at any stage then a different manager or member of the Board will carry out the investigation.

Bearing in mind that any experience of actually making a complaint may be an intimidating one, we would consider it acceptable for any service-user to be accompanied by a friend or close supporter when making a complaint to Wellbeing Scotland. This measure is designed to protect any individual who might be disabled or disadvantaged in any way by age, physical or psychological health, or anxiety.

Evidence from either party (complainant/complained against) will be heard separately and they and any representatives will not attend any complaints panel meeting at the same time.

The responsible individual managing the Complaints Procedure can halt proceedings if legal action is underway.

If you are a face to face counselling client, complaints should be made in the first instance to your counsellor, either verbally or written. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily you should follow the procedure above.

Complaints about aspects of projects should be directed to the Project Manager

Complaints or feedback regarding the helpline services should be communicated to the Administration Manager.

Other complaints can be directed to the Deputy Chief Executive.

The address and telephone number in all cases is:

98 Thornhill Road  
Falkirk  
FK2 7AB  
Tel:01324 630100

If the complaint is upheld then appropriate sanctions will be implemented under the Wellbeing Scotland disciplinary procedure.

If the above procedures have been followed and the person who made the complaint is still not satisfied with the response, and the complaint is about counselling, they can contact:

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy,  
The Customer Services Manager, BACP House, 15 St John's Business Park, Lutterworth,  
Leicestershire. LE17 4HB

or COSCA to the Chief Executive, COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland), 16  
Melville Terrace, Stirling FK8 2NE

For complaints regarding governance:

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)  
2nd Floor, Quadrant House, 9 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY  
Telephone: 01382 220446  
Website: [oscr.org.uk](http://oscr.org.uk)