



Tell Us North CIC

Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Tell Us North independence
3. Making formal complaints
4. The informal and formal processes for dealing with complaints
5. Possible actions
6. Records of complaints and grievances
7. Bullying and harassment
8. Safeguarding issues
9. Compliments and comments
10. Equality and diversity

Appendix 1 – Informal complaint form

Appendix 2 - Formal complaint form

Document details and review

Organisation	Tell Us North CIC
Responsible person	Chief Executive
Date approved	31 October 2016
Implemented	October 2016
Reviewed	December 2020
Next review	December 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Tell Us North aims to provide organisations and individuals with the best possible service. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be occasions when users of our services feel that the quality or level of service provided falls short of what they could reasonably expect. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any organisation or individual who uses Tell Us North services has the right to make a complaint, and that the complaint will be investigated and responded to within a realistic period of time.
- 1.2. Tell Us North encourages individuals to comment, make compliments or to complain about the service they receive, so that we can continue to improve what we do. Tell Us North is grateful for any feedback and will not victimise anyone for making a complaint or comment.

2. Tell Us North independence

2.1. Tell Us North receives funding from statutory bodies in order to run projects, provide services, support forums and engagement activities, carry out research and contribute towards general running costs. We also raise funds through trading and providing services. We will maintain our independence and ensure that any decisions about the employment of staff and the work of the organisation comply with the aims, objectives and values of the organisation. We will not be influenced in our decision making by funders' interventions. Strategic direction and overall policy are agreed by the Board of Directors.

3. Making formal complaints

3.1. Complaints about Tell Us North staff and volunteers

Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint about a member of staff or a volunteer should put the complaint in writing and address it to the Chief Executive marked 'Private and confidential'.

3.2. Complaints about the Chief Executive or a Director

Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint about the Chief Executive or a Director should put the complaint in writing, address it to the Chair of the Tell Us North Board and submit it via the office marked 'Private and confidential'.

3.3. Complaints about the Chair

Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint about the Chair should put the complaint in writing, address it to the Vice Chair of the Tell Us North Board and submit it via the office marked 'Private and confidential'.

3.4. Complaints about Tell Us North processes or procedures

Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint about Tell Us North processes or procedures (rather than an individual) should put the complaint in writing and address it to the Chief Executive marked 'Private and confidential'.

3.5. However, if the person to whom a formal complaint should be submitted is not available, for example they are on holiday or sick leave, it should in the case of the Chief Executive be addressed to the Chair, and in the case of the Chair to the Vice Chair.

4. The informal and formal processes for dealing with complaints4.1.

Stage one: Dealing informally with complaints and breaches

4.1.1. Wherever possible, disputes should be settled informally. Complaints can be raised informally by a complainant directly with the person concerned.

4.1.2. Alternatively, the complainant can raise the complaint informally with the manager of the person concerned, who should then offer the complainant the chance to discuss the issue privately. Hopefully it will be resolved at this stage and any suitable follow-up action will be agreed between the people involved.

4.1.3. The Tell Us North staff member to whom the complaint was taken should record details of the informal complaint using the informal complaint form, which will note the outcome.

4.1.4. If the complainant needs additional support to make comments and participate fully in the process, the Tell Us North staff member will source that support.

4.2. Stage two: Formal complaints procedure

4.2.1. If the complaint cannot be dealt with on an informal basis, the complainant should put the complaint in writing and send it by letter or email to the relevant person (see section 3 above: To whom formal complaints should be made). It should be marked 'Private and confidential'.

4.2.2. The person receiving the complaint will send written confirmation of its receipt within five working days.

4.2.3. The person dealing with the complaint will arrange to meet the parties concerned within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint. If the complainant needs additional support to make comments and participate fully in the process, the person dealing with the complaint will source that support.

4.2.4. The person whom the complaint has been made about will have the right to state their version of events and to be accompanied by a colleague, trade union official or trade union representative.

4.2.5. The person dealing with the complaint will investigate the complaint, reach a decision and notify the complainant of the outcome within 25 working days of receipt of the complaint. However, a more complex investigation might require more time. If more time is required, this will be explained to the complainant.

4.2.6. The person dealing with the complaint will record the details of the complaint, the investigation undertaken and the agreed action and outcome using the formal complaint form.

4.2.7. If the complaint is not upheld the person dealing with the complaint will inform all parties of the decision.

4.2.8. If the complaint is upheld the person dealing with the complaint will discuss appropriate action with the Chair and the person(s) whom the complaint was made about.

4.2.9. If a complaint against a Tell Us North staff member is upheld, it might invoke the Tell Us North disciplinary procedure.

4.2.10. A report outlining the action taken, but not the detail of the complaint, will be submitted to a private section of the next Board meeting.

4.3. Stage three: Appeal

4.3.1 If the complainant feels that matters have not been satisfactorily resolved they have the right to lodge an appeal with the Board. The complainant has 20 working days from the date he or she was informed of the outcome of the initial investigation in which to lodge an appeal.

4.3.2. A special meeting of a subgroup of the Board will be organised to consider the appeal within 20 working days of receiving the request. However, in more complex cases, additional and external information might be sought which could result in the appeal hearing taking place after 20 working days. The complainant will be kept informed of this.

4.3.3. The complainant may be accompanied at the appeal hearing by a second person if they wish.

4.3.4. The person whom the complaint has been made about will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague, trade union official or trade union representative.

4.3.5. Any decision taken by this subgroup of the Board is final and the complainant will be informed of the decision, and reasons for it, in writing.

4.3.6. A report outlining the action taken, but not the detail of the complaint, will be submitted to a private section of the next Board meeting.

5. Possible actions

5.1. Where a complaint is upheld, actions may be put in place. These could include (not an exhaustive list):

- Action plans to improve the service
- Advice and agreement on what behaviour is expected in future
- A limit on the Tell Us North activities the person can take part in
- A period of suspension from all activities
- Dismissal from the Board of Directors
- A ban from attending Tell Us North meetings

6. Records of complaints and grievances

6.1. A written log will be kept of all complaints and grievances received by Tell Us North about the organisation, its staff, volunteers and Directors.

6.2. All decisions arising from formal meetings will be recorded in writing and kept confidential.

7. Bullying and harassment

7.1. Tell Us North will deal with any reports of bullying and harassment in line with the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

8. Safeguarding issues

8.1. If a complaint is made which involves a safeguarding issue, the Tell Us North safeguarding policies take precedence.

9. Compliments and comments

9.1. Whenever a compliment is made, the information should be fed back to the staff concerned and their manager.

9.2. The compliment should be recorded and used as part of the internal quality process. Consideration should be given to comments that might lead to improvements in the way Tell Us North works.

10. Equality and diversity

10.1. The Tell Us North Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy will be administered in line with the Tell Us North Equality and Diversity Policy.

Appendix 1: Informal complaint form

Confidential

**Tell Us North
Informal complaint form**

Name of complainant:

Date of complaint:

Address:

Telephone no:

Email:

Nature of complaint (to include how the complaint was made and to whom):

Agreed action:

Outcome:

Signature of complainant:

Signature of Tell Us North staff member dealing with complaint:

Date completed:

Appendix 2: Formal complaint form

Confidential

**Tell Us North
Formal complaint form**

Name of complainant:

Date of complaint:

Address:

Telephone no:

Email:

Nature of complaint (to include how the complaint was made and to whom):

Investigation undertaken:

Agreed action:

Outcome:

Signature of Chief Executive:

Date:

Appendix 3: Formal comment form

Tell Us North Formal comment form

Name of commentator

Date of comment:

Address:

Telephone no:

Email:

Detail of comment (to include how the comment was made and to whom):

Comment shared with:

Response to comment:

Agreed action:

Outcome:

Signature of Chief Executive:

Date: