



YOUNG SOMERSET

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1.0 Policy Statement

The purpose of our Complaints Policy and Procedure is to ensure that all complaints are dealt with promptly and consistently. We know there may be times when we do not meet our own high standards. When this happens, we want to hear about it, deal with the situation as quickly as possible and put measures in place to stop it happening again.

At Young Somerset, we take complaints seriously and treat them as an opportunity to develop.

2.0 Complaints Relating to Safeguarding

Any complaint relating to the safeguarding of children and young people will be dealt with under Young Somerset's Safeguarding Policy.

Any complaints relating to the conduct of a Young Somerset employee or volunteer will be managed using this Complaints Policy and also with regard to our procedures for Safeguarding.

3.0 Complaints from Learners

Where a complaint is raised by a learner (for example a young person working towards accreditation, an Apprentice or a Trainee), we will refer to any respective provider guidelines or agreement, awarding organisation guidelines or agreement and/or funder contracts. Young Somerset will work together with learning providers, qualification boards and/or funders as appropriate to resolve the complaint. Where relevant, complaints will be handled in conjunction with our Internal Verification Policy or Malpractice, Maladministration and Plagiarism Policy.

Where all or part of the complaint comes under the remit or responsibility of Young Somerset, we will follow the Complaints Procedure and Appeals Procedure outlined below.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for passing on the details of any complaints received to their Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member to act upon.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members are responsible for managing complaints and seeing them through to successful conclusion.

The Complaints Officer holds the register of complaints, reporting to the Chief Executive and Board as required. The Complaints Officer will also provide an annual review of all complaints to the Board.

The Chief Executive is responsible for complaints relating to the Chair of Trustees, or where the nature of the complaint is more serious in nature.

The Chair of Trustees is responsible for managing complaints relating to the Chief Executive, SLT members or Board members, taking account for any conflicts recorded under our Conflicts of Interest Policy.

5.0 Complaints Procedure

All other complaints can be made in writing to the Young Somerset office, emailed to admin@youngsomerset.org.uk or given over the telephone or video call to a member of staff (preferably an SLT member). In order that a response can be made, we require a name, address (or email address) and contact telephone number.

Young people may have difficulty expressing feelings and concerns, particularly in writing, therefore any approach by a young person will be actively supported and fully investigated.

1. Complaints may be received by any staff member, volunteer, service user, parent/guardian or any other individual in connection with Young Somerset workforce or services. Details of all complaints, including any supporting documentation, must be sent to the Complaints Officer and SLT member immediately (or Chair of Trustees where the complaint is about the Chief Executive or an SLT member).
2. The Complaints Officer will record details on the Complaints Register. Where a complaint relates directly to actions or behaviour of the Chief Executive or other SLT member, the Complaints Officer must pass it to the Chair of Trustees.
3. The SLT member (or Chair of Trustees) will contact the person who made the complaint within 5 working days, preferably by telephone (as a conversation is usually the quickest and most effective way to resolve complaints). The SLT member (or Chair of Trustees) will acknowledge the complaint, listen to what the person has to say and what action they would like to be taken and give clarity on next steps. The SLT member (or Chair of Trustees) will take notes of the phone call and share them with the Complaints Officer.
4. The Complaints Officer will update the Complaints Register.
5. Where it is not possible to resolve the complaint in an initial phone call, the SLT member (or Chair of Trustees) will investigate the complaint and keep the complainant informed of progress. They should do this using the preferred method agreed in the initial phone call.
6. Where a formal written response has been requested, the SLT member (or Chair of Trustees) should action this and send a copy to the Complaint Officer to update the Complaints Register.
7. Where a verbal response has been made and an agreement or understanding reached with the complainant, the SLT member (or Chair of Trustees) must update the Complaints Officer with action taken.
8. The Complaints Officer will update the Complaints Register.
9. Where complaints are discussed or where a formal written response is given, the complainant must be advised that if they are unhappy with the response, they may ask for a review to be undertaken by the Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees (See Section 7.0) if this has not happened in the first instance.

6.0 Not Responding to Complaints

From time to time we may receive complaints that do not relate directly to something Young Somerset has done or that we are not in a position to comment on. We are a charity with limited resources and we must use these in the best possible way. This can mean not engaging in lengthy debates on issues that are unrelated to Young Somerset's work.

There may be rare occasions where we chose not to respond to a complaint at all. These include:

- When a complaint is about something Young Somerset has no direct connection to.
- When someone unreasonably pursues a complaint that we have already responded to. We will always inform complainants of our decision to do this.
- When a complainant is being abusive, prejudiced or offensive in their manner.
- When a complainant is harassing a member of our workforce.
- When a complaint is incoherent or illegible.
- When a complaint has clearly been sent to us and numerous other organisations as part of a bulk mailing.
- When a complaint has been sent anonymously. However, we will investigate the complaint and use the information to improve in any way we can.

7.0 Appeals Procedure

If a complainant is unhappy with the response that has been given, or the way their complaint has been handled, they may request that matters are reviewed by the Chief Executive (or Chair of Trustees).

1. The Chief Executive will review the complaint and how it was handled, consider the nature of the complaint, the thoroughness of the investigation and the response that was given.
2. Following the review, the Chief Executive (or Chair of Trustees) will either write or speak to the complainant (or do both) to advise them of the outcome of the review.
3. If the complainant is still unsatisfied, they should be advised that no further appeals procedure is given by Young Somerset. They can, however, contact the Charity Commission at:

The Charity Commission

PO Box 1227

Liverpool

L69 3UG

0845 3000 218

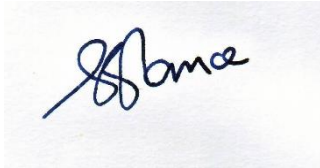
8.0 Review of Complaints

Following the resolution of a complaint the SLT member (or Chair of Trustees) should undertake a review of all matters pertaining to the complaint and consider what subsequent action, if any, should be taken with regard to organisational procedures and/or training programmes.

In addition, a review with any employee or volunteer, the subject of the complaint, by their line manager/lead contact should also be undertaken in order to provide feedback and, if appropriate, agree actions to mitigate future problems.

Where it is felt that disciplinary action may be appropriate, the matter should be dealt with under Young Somerset's Disciplinary Procedures (Employee Handbook or Volunteer Handbook).

Signed on behalf of Board

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Rance', is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

STUART RANCE, CHAIR

Date: 16th December 2020

Review Date: December 2022