

## **Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy**

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## Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy

### 1. Policy Statement and Purpose

NEXUS is committed to delivering all its services and supports in line with best practice guidelines. To achieve this, the organisation and its people should

- a) adhere to the highest professional standards, and
- b) seek to provide all its service-users, partners and funders with an exceptional experience.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide clarity and guidance on responding to feedback and improving service provision
- Ensure that concerns are responded to in a timely and robust manner
- Respect the right to privacy and confidentiality for those providing feedback, where possible
- Facilitate early resolution of complaints
- Recognise personnel acting on behalf of Nexus for work well done
- Ensure feedback influences and informs service improvements
- Identify responsibilities in the acknowledging, recording and responding to comments, compliments and complaints

### 2. Scope

This Policy and related procedures are designed to ensure best practice in responding to feedback received about the services and supports that Nexus provides.

The Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy relates to all personnel acting on behalf of Nexus including staff, associates, volunteers and board members.

The organisation receives feedback from the following sources:

- Service-users\*  
*(\*if under 16 or deemed a vulnerable adult a parent/guardian or appointed health and social care provider can provide feedback on behalf of a service-user)*
- Funders
- Partner Organisations

**Please note:** to ensure timely and effective responses to complaints and concerns these should be raised with the organisation within 3 months' and no later than 6 months' of the incident occurrence.

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### 3. General Principles

The principles of the Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy are to:

- Continually seek to improve service provision by welcoming feedback
- Acknowledge the benefits of all feedback, positive, neutral and negative in shaping the services and supports that the organisation provides
- Ensure service users are routinely offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the services and supports they receive
- Ensure service-users, partner need funders are aware of how to raise a complaint and the internal processes agreed to respond to their complaint in a timely and robust manner
- Ensure funders and partner organisations have the opportunity to provide feedback on the services and support that the organisation provides
- Obtain the minimum amount of personal information needed to facilitate effective resolution of a complaint, in line with the organisation’s Data Protection Policy. (NEXUS/G/002). This is called “Data Minimisation”.

### 4. Actions and Outcomes

When the organisation receives comments, compliments and complaints the following table outlines the actions to be taken and target outcomes to be achieved:

| Feedback   | Actions  | Responsibilities            | Target Outcomes   |
|------------|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Compliment | Acknowledge receipt of compliment with individual, group or organisation           | Person receiving compliment | Individual, group or organisation that issues compliment is assured the organisation has received this and is thanked |
|            | Share compliment with relevant members of Nexus’ Personnel (including Nexus Admin) | Person receiving compliment | Relevant personnel are recognised for the good work they have undertaken  |
|            | Add compliment to Comments, Compliments and Complaints Log                         | Nexus Admin Team            | Compliment is shared with Senior Management and feedback can be cascaded as appropriate to other departments          |

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|                    |  |  |   |
|--------------------|--|--|---|
| Comment/Suggestion | Acknowledge receipt of comment/suggestion with individual, group or organisation           | Person receiving comment / suggestion                                      | Individual, group or organisation that shares comment/suggestion is assured the organisation has received this and is thanked   |
|                    | Share comment/suggestion with relevant members of Nexus' Personnel (including Nexus Admin) | Person receiving comment / suggestion                                      | Relevant personnel are aware of the comment/ suggestion received and can consider ability to respond/implement  |
|                    | Add comment/suggestion to Comments, Compliments and Complaints Log                         | Nexus Admin Team   | Individual, group or organisation is thanked for their comment/suggestion and advised it will be shared with Senior Management for further consideration                  |
| Complaint/Concern  | Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern with individual, group or organisation            | Person receiving complaint / concern                                       | Individual, group or organisation that raises complaint/concern is assured the organisation has received this and, that it will be responded to within outlined timeframe |
|                    | Share complaint/concern with relevant members of Nexus' Personnel (including Nexus Admin)  | Person receiving complaint / concern                                       | Relevant personnel are aware of the complaint/ concern received and can identify and agree the most suitable person to investigate and resolve                            |
|                    | Add complaint/concern to Comments, Compliments and Complaints Log                          | Nexus Admin Team   | Complaint/concern is shared with Senior Management for learning and service improvement planning, as necessary  |
|                    | Investigate and resolve complaint/concern informally or formally, as appropriate           | Person receiving complaint/concern or Coordinator/Manager for Service Area | Individual, group or organisation receives an appropriate, timely and efficient resolution to the   |

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|  |  |  |                           |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|
|  | (See Appendix 1 for further information) |  | complaint/ concern raised |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|

### Please note:

- Any complaint which raises concerns of a serious nature including those of a potential breach of a code of ethics must be dealt with under the Formal Complaints Process from the outset and formal consideration will be given as to whether the complaint needs to be referred to the Charity Commission in line with their [guidance on serious incident reporting](#)
- If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint/concern at the informal stage they have the right to request that the complaint/concern is formally investigated under the organisation's Formal Complaints Procedure (NEXUS/P/001). The complainant has **10 working days** from **notification of their informal complaint outcome** to request that their complaint/concern is formally investigated.

### 5. Recording, Monitoring and Review

A Comments, Compliments and Complaints Log (NEXUS/F/003) is held to ensure information is captured and recorded accurately for ease of analysis and review.

An agreed log template has been developed for population and maintenance by the Business Operations Team. The log is securely held in the organisation's document sharing system and can only be accessed by agreed personnel.

Outcomes for each complaint are labelled as follows:

- Local Level - complaint resolved at informal stage.
- Stage 1 - complaint resolved at formal investigation
- Stage 2 - complaint resolved at review
- Stage 3 - complaint resolved at appeal
- Stage 3 – complaint unresolved at appeal

In addition, complaints are recorded and monitored anonymously on the organisation's Risk Register.

This policy is reviewed biennially by the Organisation's Operations Lead.

### 6. Legal Protection and Regulatory Compliance

To comply with the conditions of the Professional Indemnity Insurance Policy, Nexus' insurance brokers must be informed immediately if a written complaint is received

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and if a third-party solicitor is involved. Legal advice will be sought before any replies are sent to the complainant.

In line with Charity Commission for NI any complaint that is assessed as meeting the criteria of a 'serious incident' will be reported to the Commission in line with its [Guidance on Serious Incident Reporting](#).

The Commission regards a serious incident as an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in, or risks, a significant:

- loss of charity money or assets
- damage to charity property, or
- harm to the work of the charity, its beneficiaries or reputation.

### **7. Supporting Policies and Procedures**

This policy is supported by other organisational policies and procedures aimed at promoting safe and healthy working practices. These include:

CS/G/001 Clinical Governance Policy  
CS/G/002 Clinical Note Taking Policy  
CS/G/003 Confidentiality Policy

NEXUS/G/002 Data Protection Policy  
NEXUS/G/003 Privacy Notice  
NEXUS/G/008 Safeguarding Policy  
NEXUS/G/006 Whistleblowing Policy

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### Appendix 1

#### Formal Complaint Procedure

##### Introduction

Nexus' recognises the importance of appropriate and timely resolution of complaints. To support this, the organisation will seek initially to respond and resolve all complaints or concerns received in an informal manner ensuring the individual, group or organisation raising the complaint feels that the concerns raised are listened to and an appropriate response is actioned to resolve the matter.

However, the organisation also recognises that on occasion the informal resolution offered may not be to the satisfaction of the individual, group or organisation raising the complaint. In these circumstances, the dissatisfied party has the right to request that the complaint is responded to under the Formal Complaints Process. In addition, it should be noted that any complaint which raises concerns of a serious nature including those of a potential breach of a code of ethics must be dealt with under the Formal Complaints Process from the outset.

##### Formal Complaint Process

Complainants should submit their request for formal investigation of their complaint/concern by email or post using either of the following methods:

Email [info@nexusni.org](mailto:info@nexusni.org) subject title 'complaint'

Postal address Complaints -      Operations Manager  
NEXUS  
59 Malone Road  
Belfast  
BT9 6SA

As detailed, in the Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy (NEXUS/G/001) the complainant has **10 working days** from **notification of an informal complaint outcome** to request that the complaint is investigated under the organisation's staged '**Formal Complaint Process**', detailed below.

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### Stage 1 – Formal Investigation of Complaint/Concerns Raised

1. Complainant writes to request their complaint is investigated under Stage 1 of the Formal Complaints Process.

#### **Within 5 working days**

2. An agreed impartial Service Manager is appointed as 'Investigating Officer'

#### **Within 10 working days**

3. Investigating Officer will contact complainant to discuss complaint and informal outcome to ascertain remaining concerns.

#### **Within 15 working days**

4. Investigating Officer will speak to all relevant Nexus Personnel and review all relevant records to inform outcome of formal complaint.
5. Investigating Officer will raise complaint with CEO for consideration if it needs reported to Charity Commission for NI under its [Guidance on Reporting Serious Incidents](#), against Serious Incident Reporting Matrix. The CEO will discuss the seriousness of complaint with agreed Board members.

**Please note:** any incident requiring referral to the Charity Commission for NI will be reported by agreed Nexus Board Member or an appointed nominee.

#### **Within 20 working days**

6. Investigating Officer will inform complainant of outcome of Stage 1 Formal Complaints Process in writing.  
The response to the complaint should directly address the issues raised in the complaint:
  - (a) If the complaint has been upheld the complainant should receive an apology and notification of any steps that will be taken to remedy the matter. If there is dissatisfaction with the response the complainant should be informed of their right to request a Stage 2 review.
  - (b) If the complaint has not been upheld the complainant should be informed of their right to request a Stage 2 review.

#### **Within 25 working days**

7. Any agreed improvement activity and associated actions are commenced to embed learning and prevent future complaints of a similar nature. This action will be led by the organisation's Senior Management Team.

#### **Please note:**

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint determined by the appointed Investigating Officer at Stage 1, they have the right to request that their complaint is progressed to Stage 2 of the Formal Complaints Process.



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- The complainant has **10 working days** from written notification of their complaint outcome at Stage 1 to request that their complaint outcome is reviewed under Stage 2 of the Formal Complaints Process.

### **Stage 2 – Review of Stage 1 Formal Complaint Outcome**

1. Complainant writes to request their complaint outcome is reviewed under Stage 2 of the Formal Complaints Process.

#### **Within 5 working days**

2. An agreed impartial Senior Manager is appointed as ‘Investigating Officer’

#### **Within 10 working days**

3. Investigating Officer will contact complainant to discuss complaint, the outcome of Formal Stage 1 investigation and determine remaining concerns.

#### **Within 15 working days**

4. Investigating Officer will speak to all relevant Nexus Personnel and review all relevant records to inform outcome of formal complaint.

#### **Within 20 working days**

5. Investigating Officer will inform complainant of the outcome of Stage 2 Formal Complaints Process in writing.  
The response to the complaint should directly address the issues raised in the complaint:
  - a) If the Stage 1 outcome has been overturned the complainant should receive an apology and notification of any steps that will be taken to remedy the matter. If there is dissatisfaction with the response the complainant should be informed of their right to appeal.
  - b) If the Stage 1 outcome has been upheld the complainant should be informed of their right to appeal.

#### **Within 25 working days**

6. Any agreed improvement activity and associated actions are commenced to embed learning and prevent future complaints of a similar nature.

#### **Please note:**

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 review of the formal complaint outcome, they have the right to request an appeal of the review under Stage 3 of the Formal Complaints Process.
- The complainant has **10 working days** from written notification of Stage 2 review to request that the review is appealed under Stage 3 of the Formal Complaints Process.

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### **Stage 3 – Appeal of Complaint Review**

1. Complainant writes to the Chief Executive ([ceo@nexusni.org](mailto:ceo@nexusni.org)) to request an appeal of Stage 2 under Stage 3 of the Formal Complaints Process.

#### **Within 5 working days**

2. The CEO acknowledges right to appeal in writing to the complainant.

#### **Within 15 working days**

3. The CEO and a minimum of one independent representative from the organisation's Board of Trustees undertake a final stage investigation of the complaint to include all complaint records and speaking with relevant personnel.

#### **Within 20 working days**

4. The CEO writes to complainant to advise outcome of appeal. The response to the complaint should directly address the issues raised in the complaint:
  - a) If the Stage 2 review outcome has been overturned the complainant should receive an apology and notification of any steps that will be taken to remedy the matter. If there is dissatisfaction with the response the complainant should be informed of their right to appeal.
  - b) If the Stage 2 review outcome has been upheld the complainant should be informed that the appeal is the final stage of the organisation's Formal Complaints Process.
  - c) If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome they are within their rights to raise their complaint with any relevant third party regulator

#### **Within 25 working days**

5. Any agreed improvement activity and associated actions are commenced to embed learning and prevent future complaints of a similar nature.

#### **Please note:**

- The Comments, Compliments and Complaints Log (NEXUS/F/003) must be updated to reflect outcome, as per Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy (NEXUS/G/001).