

Cassandra Centre



Cassandra Centre

If it hurts it isn't love

Complaints Policy

Complaints Policy

Contents

Contents and Review dates.....2

Policy Statement..... 3

Our approach to complaints3

Confidentiality.....4

Our complaints process4

Stage one:4

Stage two: 4

Final Stage: External Ombudsman5

Monitoring and Review.....5

Reviewed	June 2026
Next Review	August 2027
Version	2.0
Author	CEO

Policy Statement

Cassandra Centre is committed to providing an effective learning and working environment based around the highest level of service, and positive, effective working relationships so that members of staff, counsellors and volunteers have a better working experience, and this includes members of the public who have contact with us. Although we aim to offer excellent services and value for money, we are aware that we may occasionally get it wrong. If someone feels that the services and treatment, we provided fell short of reasonable expectations, we would like them to let us know. This will assist us in providing more efficient and improved services in the future, which will enable us to:

- put things right
- learn from our mistakes, and
- improve our services.

This Policy aims to ensure that all members of staff and members of the public, have an opportunity to raise concerns using a process which resolves issues confidentially, quickly, fairly, with respect and with an emphasis on informal, open communication and local resolution through the line management structure to promote positive working relations while observing the spirit of promoting equality and valuing diversity.

It is the responsibility of all staff working for Cassandra Centre to adhere to this policy, and to follow our approach to handling complaints. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that all staff, counsellors and volunteers adhere to this policy and procedure, and for ensuring that all the necessary measures are in place to implement them effectively and fairly.

Our approach to complaints

In keeping with our aims and objectives, we are committed to providing services of the highest standard, complying with prevailing legislation, regulation and following best practice, and we aim to do this in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect with our clients, stakeholders and members of the public who have contact with us.

We always aim to promote this culture and one of the best ways in which we can do so is by listening and responding to the views, comments, suggestions and complaints that we receive. This ensures that we keep the focus on the quality of the stakeholder experience and that we learn lessons and put things right, in the right way.

To make this possible we aim to:

- Ensure that making a complaint is as easy as possible,
- Treat every complaint seriously,
- Investigate and deal with complaints promptly and in a professional and polite manner,
- Respond appropriately and ensure that the complainant understands our response,
- Use complaints as opportunities to learn and to improve the stakeholder experience, and, where appropriate change the way we work to avoid repetition,
- Make sure that people know how to escalate any complaints as appropriate.
- Learn from complaints, use them to improve our services, and biennially review our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that some complaints will be raised informally, and, can be dealt with immediately or quickly and we encourage all staff to address such issues as appropriate. Where these complaints cannot be satisfactorily resolved in this way, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Confidentiality

Cassandra Centre aims to deal with matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of the individuals involved. All members of staff must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in relation to matters being addressed under this Policy.

Where it is necessary to disclose information provided by a member of staff in confidence to allow a matter to be fully investigated, or to enable necessary advice to be obtained, the member of staff will, wherever possible, be notified of the intention to disclose information in advance.

Our Complaints Process

The process is simple, transparent and clearly defines the procedures for all involved. The process has three stages and we aim to resolve issues in stage 1 where possible. We would prefer any concerns or complaints to be brought to Cassandra Centre's attention through the following stages, however individuals may choose to use any stage that they feel is necessary.

Stage One:

We encourage individuals to raise concerns and complaints with any member of staff at Cassandra Centre in the first instance, as we aim to acknowledge complaints as quickly as possible. If you are unable to resolve the issue informally with the member of staff who dealt with you, you may write to the Chief Executive Officer so that she has a chance to put things right. If your complaint concerns a Trustee of Cassandra Centre, rather than a member of staff, you should write formally to the individual concerned. 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.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 4 working days of receipt. We aim to keep individuals up to date with any investigations and/or outcomes and will make every effort to provide a formal response within 20 working days. If it's likely to take longer then we will let complainants know as soon as possible. Our contact details can be found on the Contact Us part of the Cassandra Centre website.

Stage Two:

Cassandra Centre's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. The formal process should take between two to four weeks, but there may be occasions where these time limits cannot be adhered to due to circumstances out of the control of any party. There will be consultation on any extension of the timescales with both parties if this situation occurs.

However, some issues will be more complex and 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.

If a staff member, counsellor, volunteer or a member of the public is not satisfied with any aspect of the Chief Executive Officer's response they receive in stage one, they can write to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to ask for their complaint and the response to be reviewed stating the reasons why they are dissatisfied with the outcome. This must be done within 10 days of receiving the written response from the Chief Executive Officer.

Individuals can expect the Chair of the Board of Trustees to acknowledge their request within 4 working days of receiving their request and be informed of the action that will be taken to investigate their complaint, and when they can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation. After this, the Chairman will provide a written response to the you within 10 working days. If it is likely to take longer, then the Chairman will let you know as soon as possible.

Note. If your original complaint was against the Chair of the Board of Trustees, then Stage Two will be handled by the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of Cassandra Centre.

Final Stage: External Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent outcome and replies in stage 1 and stage 2 from both the Chief Executive Officer and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, you have the option of writing and referring your complaint to a third party, usually through the Ombudsman service. This service normally provides free independent advice.

The Local Government Ombudsman service in England is:

The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
Tel: 0300 061 0614
www.lgo.org.uk

Monitoring and Review

This Policy is not contractual, and Cassandra Centre reserves the right to alter or withdraw it at any time. This Policy is not intended to create rights beyond the Employer's statutory obligations. This Policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis, and at the discretion of the Board of Trustees. Additionally, it will be reviewed in line with changes to relevant employment legislation.

All complaints will be retained in our Complaints File. The complainants name will not be recorded unless permission is given. Complaints will be monitored and reviewed internally to identify any patterns and to ensure that appropriate lessons can be learned, and improvements made. The Complaints File will be available for stakeholders to review.

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees and will be reviewed annually.