



Centre for Young Refugees and Migrants

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS POLICY

2023 version

Terms, Acronyms

Service Users

To include all children, young people (0-17) and vulnerable adults (18+) who access Dost's services

Staff

To include all employees, coaches, tutors, student placements, volunteers at Dost

Trustees

To include all Dost Trustees

Management

To include Director and Board of Trustees

Visitors

To include all visitors, funders, staff, volunteers and coaches from other organisations

Carers

To include all parents/ extended family/ foster carers, keyworkers, corporate parents, such as Children's Services

The Public

To include members of the public who may come into contact with Dost services or Service Users

Named Leads

Director - Marian Spiers

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Lead – DSL/ DDSL

DSL - Marian Spiers (updated December 2023)

DDSL - Kelly Williams – ESOL Tutor (completed December 2023)

Supervising to Safeguard

Marian Spiers (completed October 2023)

Safer Recruitment

Marian Spiers (Updated November 2023)

First Aider at Work

Marian Spiers (updated July 2021)

Kelly Williams – ESOL Tutor (completed July 2021)

Mental Health First Aider

Marian Spiers (February 2021)

Data Protection Officer

Marian Spiers

Safety and Safeguarding Trustee

Thomas Edwards (DSL Trained 2021)

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS

Introduction

All Staff, Service Users, Carers, Trustees and The Public have the right to complain, compliment or comment about our service and have this thoroughly and fairly investigated. We believe that having an effective complaints system helps us to understand how our service is perceived from our others' points of view. It also helps us monitor quality issues and inform any future decisions we take regarding our service.

The purpose of the following statement of procedure is to define the process by which Dost will respond to any complaints.

Procedure

[NOTE: This section should be read in conjunction with the [Complaints Flowchart in Appendix 4.](#)]

Staff **MUST** inform the Director of **ALL** complaints from themselves, Service Users and The Public.

[see [Appendix 1](#) for further guidance]

When responding to verbal complaints, the following details need to be noted:

- Identify the name and contact details of the complainant
- Obtain any information necessary to understand the nature of the complaint
- Ensure that the [Complaints Form](#) is completed [see [Appendix 2](#)]
- Pass the completed complaints form to the Director or Trustees as soon as possible

When responding to written complaints:

- Ensure that the [Complaints Form](#) is completed as above (attaching the written complaint to the Form)
- Pass this to the [Director or Trustees](#) as soon as possible

The Director is then responsible for receiving these complaints and ensuring that action is taken in a timely manner.

There is a link on the Dost website to this Policy and people are encouraged to get in touch to complain or compliment.

When investigating complaints, the Director should always try to actively listen to what the complainant has to say, rather than arguing with them or trying to 'pass the buck'.



The Director should ensure they take the following steps:

- Record the initial details of the complaint on the [Dost Complaints Register](#). This Register is held by the Director [see '[Monitoring](#)' section below for further information] and is reviewed annually by the Trustees.
- Meet with the complainant in order to give them a chance to discuss their feelings about the issues prompting their complaint, to outline how the Dost complaints process works, and explain what they can expect to happen next.
- Establish as many of the 'facts' of the situation as is reasonably possible. This may involve a review of documentary evidence, interviewing Staff, requesting reports from Staff, as well as interviewing other relevant parties.
- Meet with the complainant and all other appropriate parties in order to discuss and agree an appropriate action plan based on the above investigation. If necessary, an interpreter will be found to ensure the complainant is able to be understood and can understand the discussion.
- Produce a written report outlining the conclusions of the investigation.
- Notify the complainant in writing of the outcome of the investigation or through the use of an interpreter.
- Record the outcome of the complaint on the [Complaints Register](#)

Investigating a Complaint

If the complaint is about, or in any material way involves, the Director, then the Director must inform the Trustees of this fact. The Trustees will then decide whether it is appropriate for the Director to investigate the complaint and, if not, will decide who will be responsible for investigating the complaint in line with the steps set out above.

Appeals Procedure

Should the complainant remain dissatisfied by the outcome of the complaint, the Director must refer the matter to the Trustees for appeal.

The Trustees must then convene in order to decide whether a formal Appeal Hearing is required.

Monitoring

All complaints made by Service Users will be noted on the [Complaints Register](#) held by the Director which allows Dost to monitor:

- the number and nature of complaints received
- how these were dealt with
- any issues raised by these complaints
- all actions taken to provide better services
- the effectiveness of the Complaints Policy and Procedures.

Feedback

At Dost, we strive to listen to the young people, staff, volunteers and members of the community/ public and will invite young people to take part in evaluations and also ask staff and volunteers and outside agencies to comment or give feedback on our service and help develop it and ensure it is as positive as it can be for all involved. We will design feedback surveys/ evaluations to be as accessible as possible to the young people.



Appendix 1 - Guidance for Dealing with Complaints

Most people complain because they have a problem, not because they enjoy complaining.

They may have an idea of what their problem is, but it is up to Staff to find out exactly:

- a) What the complainant perceives as the problem.
- b) What the actual problem is (which may be different from the perceived problem).

Most importantly, listen to the person and acknowledge what they are saying. You may be able to tell what the actual problem is within a few seconds - but remember that the person 'owns' the problem and has a right to be heard.

Remember, something which may seem trivial to you, may feel catastrophic to the complainant.

Firstly, find out the nature of the problem as they see it – at this stage, much of the discussion may be about emotions and there might not be much information about the actual problem.

Secondly, identify the actual problem accurately. This entails listening to the person and asking them relevant questions in order to clarify in what way Dost has failed to meet their expectations or needs (see guidelines below).

When a person comes to you with a complaint:

- Identify yourself, tell the person your name and offer to help. **NEVER** say 'it's not my job' **NEVER** get into an argument with the person – instead, acknowledge their concern
- Don't tell them what you can't do, maintain the focus on what you **CAN** do
- Ask for the facts, check that you understand the problem – but take care not to interrupt them or jump to conclusions before they have finished
- Avoid technical/ professional jargon
- Finally, **DO NOT** make promises unless you are sure that you can keep them

Clarify the problem with the following questions:

- Ask the person making the complaint to specify exactly what the problem is
- Identify the background information to the problem
- Find out what the present situation is
- Explore the scale of the problem - do others have the same problem, even though they have not complained?
- Find out what the complainant wants to achieve from reporting this problem
- Check your own contribution to the problem; What role are you playing in it? Are you helping or hindering the situation? (Remember: try not to be defensive)
- Examine all the pieces - does the person feel that you understand what the problem is?

Once all this information has been gathered, forward the details to the Director,(if they have not been involved in the discussion), who will contact the complainant within 7 working days.

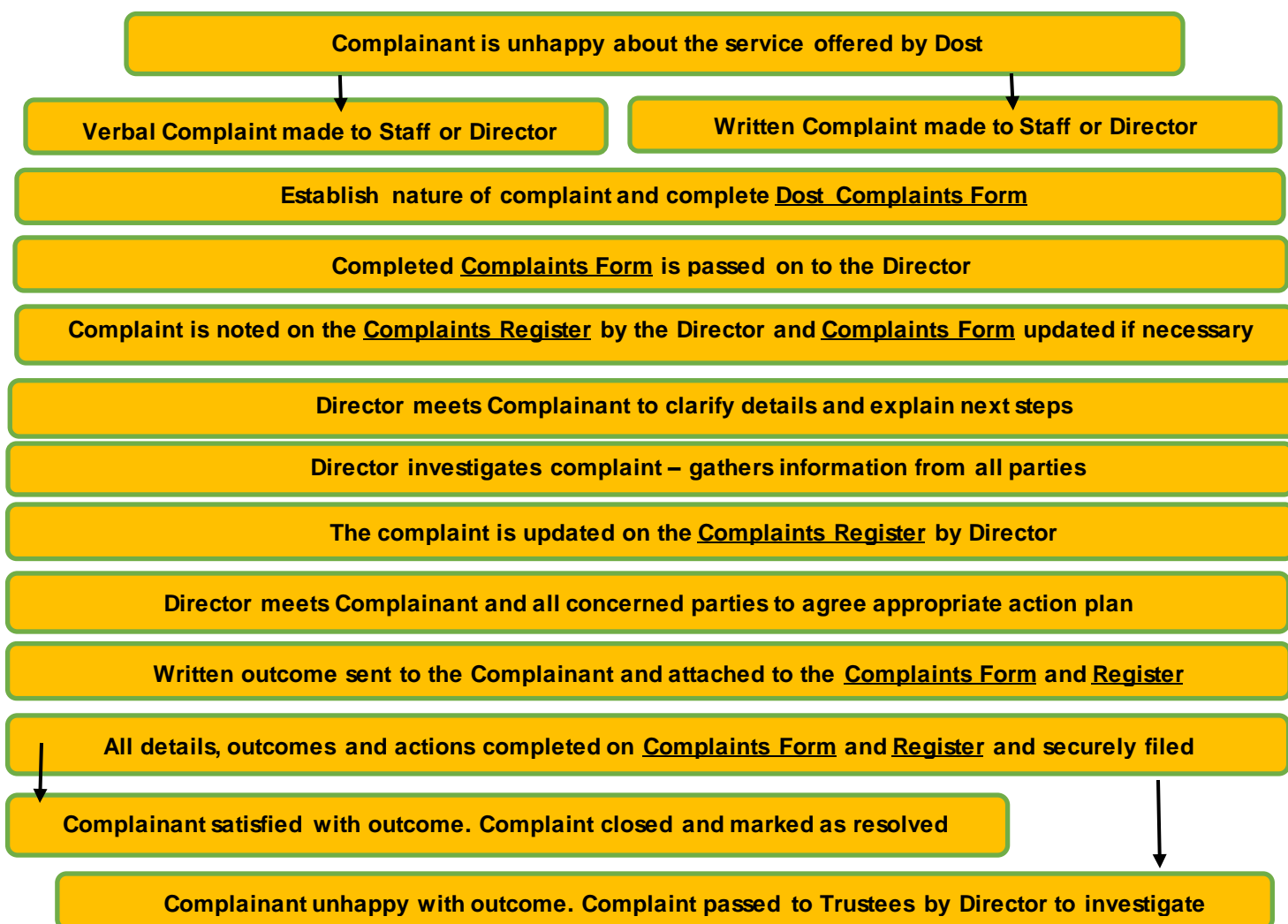
Appendix 2 – Complaints. Compliment, Comments Form

COMPLAINT, COMPLIMENT OR COMMENTS FORM	
Name of person making complaint, compliment, comment	
Telephone Number	
Address/ email address (preferred way to contact you)	
Complaint, compliment, comment details Names, dates, activities, what happened?	
Results of investigation if relevant	
Action taken and outcome	
Date complainant contacted with the results of the investigation and action taken/ accepted?	
Name of person investigating complaint	
Signed and dated by investigating staff:	
Signed and dated by Complainant:	
Signed and dated by Director:	

Appendix 3 – Complaints/ Suggestions Register

COMPLAINTS/SUGGESTIONS REGISTER					
Date of complaint/ suggestion	Received from	Received by	Action Taken and date Changes implemented?	Follow up?	Outcome Accepted?

Appendix 4 - Complaints Flowchart



COMPLAINTS/ COMPLIMENTS	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Reviewed and revised (Marian Spiers)	December 2020		July 2022	September 2023	
Agreed by Trustees	December 2020 (Jim Minton)		September 2022 (Jim Minton)	October 2023 (Jim Minton)	