

St Mary's Contact Centre - Complaints Policy & Procedure

St Mary's Contact Centre aims to provide families and referrers with the best possible service. We value openness and honesty and your opinions, comments and suggestions are always very welcome. Sometimes, however, we may get things wrong and you have a right to make a complaint. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and to improve our services, as well as a chance to put things right for the person who has made the complaint.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents that have used the Centre. Any person, including those who have been unable to use the Centre's services, may make a complaint to St Mary's Contact Centre about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

It is in everyone's interest that minor concerns and more serious complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure.

If you have a complaint about our centre, we would like to sort it out as soon as possible. Many complaints can be resolved informally. If you feel able, speak to a member of staff who is working with you, or ask to speak to the Coordinator on duty on the day. If you prefer, you can make an appointment with the Coordinator and they will try to sort the matter out.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

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If you are not satisfied or do not wish to seek an informal solution, you may make a formal complaint. There are three stages to the St Mary's Contact Centre's complaints procedure

Stage 1

Your complaint should be put in writing and sent to the Coordinator. There is a complaint form available which you may find useful to use, or you may write a letter or send an email to stmarysccc@gmail.com. It is helpful if you clearly state what you are unhappy about, and give details about what has happened, why something has caused you concern and, if applicable, what you would like to happen to put things right.

The Coordinator will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days and will tell you who is dealing with it and when you can expect a reply. They may delegate an appropriate person to help look into the complaint and to take appropriate action – this will usually be the Deputy Coordinator. If your complaint is about the Coordinator you should send your complaint to the Complaints Officer at office@norwichcentral.org (see Stage 2 below). You may also post your complaint to Norwich Central Baptist Church, Duke St. Norwich, NR3 3AP. Please mark it 'Private and Confidential'.

Your complaint will be investigated and, if it relates to a specific person or persons, they will be informed and given an opportunity to respond. If appropriate, the person investigating may clarify or seek additional information from you, or may speak to any witnesses to events. If possible, you will receive a reply to your complaint within 15 working days. The reply should describe the nature of your complaint, action taken to investigate it, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of your complaint. It will also explain what you should do if you are not happy with the decision and how to progress your complaint to Stage 2.

Stage 2

If you feel your problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, you should notify the Complaints Officer at office@norwichcentral.org or by post to NCBC, Duke St. Norwich NR3 3AP that you wish to take it further. This should be done within 14 days of receiving the response from Stage 1.

The Complaints Officer will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days. The Complaints Officer may investigate the facts of the complaint themselves or may designate a senior person to do so. They may review all the paperwork of the complaint or may speak to the person who looked into the complaint at Stage 1. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and be given a further opportunity to respond.

You can expect a reply to your complaint from the Complaints Officer within 4 weeks. If this is not possible for any reason, a progress report should be sent to you with a new date when the investigation should be completed.

The reply you receive will inform you of the action taken to investigate the complaint, whether it has been upheld or not, and any conclusions or action taken as a result of the complaint. You will also be informed how to progress to the next stage if you do not feel the problem has been satisfactorily resolved.

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Stage 3

If you are not happy with the outcome of Stage 2, you must inform the Chair of the Trustees within 14 days of receiving the response. You can send your complaint to stmaryscctrustees@gmail.com. You may also post your complaint to the Chair of the Trustees at NCBC Duke St. Norwich NR3 3AP. Please mark it 'Private and Confidential.'

A panel of 3 Trustees will be convened, not including the person who investigated at Stage 2. You will be invited to attend a meeting with them to discuss your complaint. The panel will consider all previous information and may wish to speak to staff/volunteers involved. A written decision will be sent to you within 4 weeks. The decision taken at this stage is final.

Variations to the complaints procedure

The Trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest or to ensure an independent investigation, for example.

Monitoring and learning

Complaints will be recorded and reported to the next meeting of the Trustees. Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends or need for further action to improve the service.

Written records of all complaints, including any written legal or insurance responses, will be held by the Chair of the Trustees in a confidential file.

The St Mary's Contact Centre is an accredited member of the National Association of Child Contact Centres. If after this procedure has been carried out you are still not happy with the response, then you may write to the Chief Executive, NACCC, 2nd Floor, Friary Chambers, 26-34 Friar Lane, Nottingham NG1 6DQ. However, it should be noted that the role of NACCC in such cases will be to facilitate a satisfactory conclusion to the complaint and to look at whether the centre has handled the complaint in line with their own complaints procedure, rather than to conduct a formal investigation. As a membership organisation NACCC has no responsibility for the staffing or day to day running of member centres, however they do advise, support and accredit centres and require member centres to work to the highest standards.

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Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

1. The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:
 - explain the complaint in full as early as possible.
 - co-operate with the centre in seeking a solution to the complaint.
 - respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint.
 - ask for assistance as needed.
 - treat all those involved in the complaint with respect.
 - refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator

1. The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:
 - providing an open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
 - sensitive and thorough investigation to establish what has happened and who has been involved.
 - interviewing staff and other people relevant to the complaint if necessary.
 - consideration of records and other relevant information.
 - analysing information.
 - liaisi
 - ng with the complainant as appropriate, to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct investigations with an open mind.
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any further complaint.
- be mindful of the timescales to respond.
- prepare a response that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action **to resolve problems.**

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Name	Signature	Date
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