



Complaints Suggestions & Compliments Procedure 2025

Introduction

Impactful Lives welcomes complaints, suggestions and compliments. It sees this as a way for people supported by Impactful Lives to express their views, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the staff, volunteers or other service users. We take all complaints seriously, and are happy to listen to any suggestions that people make.

We aim to respond to all complaints positively.

Compliments

We would also like to know when things are going well and welcome people's comments. Compliments or suggestions about how to change and improve our services help us to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities and family carers in the best way. Compliments or suggestions should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees.

The Board will receive an annual report, with the number of complaints and compliments received, giving an indication of common themes and the lessons learned by the organisation.

Our Complaints Form is designed so all people who use our service can access it.

Many LGBTQ+ people are subject to an increased level of abuse, suffer bias or stigma and must be dealt with in a respectful and understanding manner as many have been victim of being ignored, sidelined or not included.

LGBTQ+ people with a physical disability, neurological condition or mental health need are potentially at risk and may not be able to communicate clearly if they have a complaint. It is therefore important that parents or family carers contact us too, so that we are able to look into any complaint or concerns that they may have.

We have both a formal and informal complaints procedure and Impactful Lives will ensure that any issue brought to our attention is recorded.

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the complaints, suggestions and compliments procedure at induction and may also use our Whistleblowing Policy.

What should you do?

Informal Complaints:

If people have a complaint, we ask that they raise this in the first instance with the Manager. If the complaint is minor, it is hoped that any concerns related to the complaint can and will be addressed informally. The Manager will document the complaint and any action taken on a record sheet. If for any reason it is not possible to resolve the matter informally, or the complaint is about the Manager, people are advised to raise that matter with the Chair of Trustees.

Impactful Lives has a one-stage complaints procedure. If the complaint is more serious or a minor complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, it will be dealt with as a Stage One complaint.

Stage One:

The complaint can be made verbally or in writing and a copy should be passed to the Manager, who will arrange a response on behalf of Impactful Lives. The details of the complaint will be recorded on the complaints log sheet. These sheets are monitored and reviewed by the Chair of Trustees, and by the Board, on an annual basis.

The Manager will usually be asked to investigate the complaint.

The Manager will then set a time to meet with the person making the complaint to discuss the complaint in detail and be clear what action they feel should have taken place. The focus should be on clarifying what the complainant wants to happen, and any lessons for the organisation. The Manager will also talk to witnesses or any other relevant people and take account of all the facts and circumstances.

The Manager will write a letter with the outcome of the investigation. The letter will inform the complainant of their right to appeal if they are still not satisfied.

Responses to any complaint will be made within seven working days in writing and a copy given to the Chair of Trustees.

If the complaint is about the manager, then the steps above will be undertaken by the Chair of Trustees. If the complaint is about the Chair of Trustees the steps will be taken by other Trustees collectively.

Appeals

If the person making the complaint is still not satisfied, they are advised to appeal to the Chair of Trustees for Impactful Lives (or in absence one of the other Trustees). The Chair will arrange to meet with them to discuss the appeal. This will be arranged within 10 working days. The Chair will appoint a Panel of three Board Members to hear the appeal and will usually chair the appeal meeting. They will hear information from the Chair of Trustees and the Complainant, and review the paperwork. The Panel will then decide and convey it in writing to both parties.

Taking a complaint further than Impactful Lives

For some Impactful Lives services, if you remain unhappy after we have heard your complaint, you may complain to Hertfordshire County Council. For Adults please go to Adult Social Care Complaints team or Public Health relating to Suicide Prevention.

We do not currently provide specific children's services although parents or carers are usually present during our organised activities.
Or you could speak to your Hertfordshire County Council social worker.

For health-related activities, you may prefer to speak with Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust for other commissioned service.

Once a complaint has been fully dealt with by Impactful Lives, if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome they can refer their complaint to the **Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)** and ask for it to be reviewed. The LGO provides a free, independent service.

The LGO Advice Team can be contacted for information and advice:

T: 0300 061 0614

E: advice@lgo.org.uk

W: www.lgo.org.uk

The LGO will not usually investigate a complaint until Impactful Lives has had an opportunity to respond and resolve matters.

Date of last review	February 2025
Date of next review	February 2026
Date it was first implemented	May 2023
Author(s)	Chair of Trustees
Audience	All Trustees, Employees, Volunteers and Stakeholders.
Other relevant policies and/or procedures	Conflicts of Interest Policy, Data Retention, Whistle Blowing policy, Disciplinary policy and Anti-bribery statement.
Where it is saved	www.il-org.uk