Complaint Procedure for Learners and their Representatives

1.0 Dealing with complaints

1.1. Learners and their representatives are assured that concerns and complaints will be dealt with quickly and sympathetically.

1.2. Condover College Ltd (CCL) welcomes comments and complaints when the level of the service that is delivered does not meet the needs of the learners, their relatives/ supporters or where other concerns and complaints have been identified.

1.3. The staff Induction Training Programme will include training in the complaints system used and the Duty of Candour.

1.4. On-going staff training will be aimed at using the Complaints Procedure as a positive tool for identifying opportunities for improvement.

1.5. Complaints will not be seen as criticism, either on a personal level or criticism of CCL in general.

1.6. What may appear trivial to one person may be seen as a major issue for another.

1.7. Staff should not use the complaints system as a means of raising an issue or as a means of making a complaint. They should instead use either the Grievance or Speaking up About Wrong Doing Policy and Procedure.

1.8. Learners will be supplied with a copy of the complaints procedure in a format suitable to their needs.

1.9. In order that learners understand that they have a right to complain, staff will make every attempt to explain how the learner should go about it.

1.10. The procedure that learners need to follow and reasons why they might want to complain will be discussed during each house meeting in a way that can be understood.

1.11. Where learners are unable to communicate their feelings through speech, alternative means of communication, signs, pictures etc will be used.

1.12. CCL promotes and encourages the use of independent and group advocacy.

2.0 Policy Statement

2.1. We recognise that there is a fine divide between being 'dissatisfied with a service' and a 'complaint'. Learners and their relatives do not need to make a 'formal complaint' for their dissatisfaction to be acted upon.

2.2. All complaints will be acted upon quickly and effectively in a way, which is non-discriminatory to the complainant.

2.3. Any person wishing to complain does not need to provide their personal details on the complaints form, although it may restrict any investigation if the identity of the complainant is not known.

2.4. We recognise that complaints are not personal criticism and will ensure that complaints are seen as an opportunity to improve the level and standard of service provided.

2.5. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints 'in house' but recognise that this may not always be possible

2.6. Complainants do not have to write anything down, complaints may be made by telephone, in person, in writing or by email see Appendix 1 for contact details

2.7. Anonymous complaints will be investigated following the same procedure as when the complainant is known.

2.8. CCL will supply, on request, a written copy of this complaints procedure to any learner, anyone acting on behalf of a learner with their permission or any other person.

2.9. We fully support our learners' right to refer any complaint, at any stage, to the Care Quality Commission or Local Government Ombudsman (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

2.10. A complaint must be made no later than 12 weeks after:

- The date the event occurred or, if later,
- The date the event came to the notice of the complainant

The time limit will not apply if Condover College is satisfied that:

- The complainant can give a good reason for not making the complaint within that time limit, and
- Despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly

3.0 Procedure

3.1. The Director of Education, Director of Care & Support and Director of Opportunities are responsible for ensuring that each learner, their supporters and stakeholders are aware that CCL has a complaints procedure.

This will be achieved by:

- Inclusion in the Learners' Guide of the Complaints Procedure and Complaints Information Notes.
- Notices boards around at the college and residential areas.
- Inclusion of complaint analysis in newsletters, meetings and reports.

- Ensuring that prospective learners are provided with a copy of the Complaints Procedure.
- Making the Complaint Procedure available to stakeholders and other professionals on request.

3.2. The style, content and format of the complaints information will be such that it is easily understood by learners and appropriate to their needs

3.3. Where additional assistance is required to understand the complaints procedure this will be provided or advice on where they may obtain this given.

3.4. On occasions where an 'informal complaint' is received, the Chief Executive will designate a member of staff to deal with the complaint ("Investigating Officer").

3.5. The Investigating Officer will ensure that a record is made and steps are taken to try to resolve the issues raised.

3.6. The Investigating Officer will seek to resolve informal complaints in a timely and effective manner. Where this does not happen to the satisfaction of the complainant, they should be offered the opportunity to elevate the informal complaint to become a 'Formal Complaint'.

4.0 Formal complaints

4.1. Formal complainants do not have to be in writing. Complaints may be made by telephone, in person, in writing or by email to the Director of Education, Director of Care & Support or Director of Operations in which the complainant should state that they wish to make a complaint.

4.2. We will accept complaints from representatives on behalf of the learners'.

4.3. Where a formal complaint or an informal complaint has been elevated to become a formal complaint, the Director of Education, Director of Care & Support or Director of Operations will:

- Make an opening entry in the Complaints Register
- Where the complaint has been made in writing, write to the complainant within 5 working days to acknowledge the complaint.
- Where the complaint was been made in person or by telephone, provide a written copy of the complaint within five working days.
- Inform them who the investigating officer will be (this will be a person with sufficient seniority to resolve the issue).
- Provide an estimation of how long the investigation is likely to take.
- Inform the complainant that they may refer the matter to CQC or Shropshire Adult Safeguarding Team or the Local Government Ombudsman at any time.

4.4. The complaints process is confidential and the name of any complainant will not be readily identifiable from general entries in the registers and logs or from the covers of files and folders.

4.5. Each complaint will be assigned a unique reference number using the information entered into the Incident Log Register. This reference number will be used on all documentation relating to the complaint, complainant and investigation.

4.6. Each Complaint Folder will only show the following detail on its outer cover:

- Unique Reference Number (from the Incident Log Register)
- The person responsible for investigating the complaint ("The Investigating Officer").

4.7. The Director of Education, Director of Care & Support or Director of Operations is responsible for the thorough investigation of all complaints and responsibility for ensuring that investigations undertaken by others are in line with the best practice standards required.

4.8. We will deal with the complaint as quickly as possible and aim to complete the investigation within 28 days, however each investigation may differ in the length of time it takes to competes.

4.9. We aim to have all complaint investigations concluded within six months unless a different deadline is agreed with the complaint and there is a good reason for this.

4.10. The Investigating Officer will keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation

4.11. Following the completion of the investigation, the Investigating Officer will provide the complainant with a written 'Complaint Investigation Report'. This document should identify:

- The nature of the complaint
- The actions taken to investigate the complaint
- The people involved in the investigation
- The findings of the investigation
- Conclusion
- Action plan
- The appeal process if not satisfied with the outcome
- The right to take the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman

4.12. The Investigating Officer may also decide to hold meeting with the complainant to discuss the findings and conclusions in order to determine what may be the best action plan for the future. A record of this meeting should be made and included in the Complaint Folder.

4.13. If a complaint proceeds beyond stage one wherever possible the review will be completed within 28 days of receiving a formal request.

5.0 Summary of complaints.

5.1. The Director of Education, Director of Care & Support or Director of Operations is responsible for ensuring that complete and comprehensive records of all complaints are kept.

5.2. We are required to make available to the CQC a summary of all complaints arising since the previous inspection visit. The presentation and content of this summary will be decided by the Director of Care & Support and agreed with CQC.

6.0 Comments and Complaints Procedure

6.1. CCL aims to provide a high quality service. We know however that everything won't always be right and feel that being open to comments by learners' will help us to improve our services.

6.2. We want you to tell us about anything you are not satisfied with. These may include situations where you feel our service has not been good enough or where we have not responded to you quickly enough or well enough. It may include things about the accommodation as well as about the service we provide.

6.3. We aim to respond to all complaints within 28 days. Normally it will be much sooner than this, but some may take longer.

6.4. We will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 5 working days.

6.5. If appropriate we will arrange to meet with you to discuss your complaint and what we may be able to do.

6.6. If you or your family makes a complaint about anything you will not be treated any differently because of it. If you feel that someone is victimising you because you have made a complaint you should tell someone whom you feel comfortable talking to about it.

6.7. When a complaint has been received and it is deemed significant (substantial) the funding authority will be notified. Dependent on the complaint CQC or Ofsted may also need to be informed in line with legislation.

7.0 How to make a complaint.

7.1. Discussion

7.1.1. Many concerns can be resolved before they become real problems. If you want to talk about something that is worrying you, you can do this with any member of staff.

7.1.2. This may be about members of staff, other learners, visitors to the organisation or practise

7.2. Formal Submission

7.2.1. You should make your complaint to the Director of Care & Support, Director of Education or Director of Operations; we request that you put the complaint in writing, however, we are happy to accept this verbally. We will then write to you to confirm the details of the complaint.

7.3. Stage One (Investigation)

7.3.1. We will allocate an Investigating Officer who will investigate the complaint. They will report back to you as per 4.3. If you are not satisfied with the Stage One outcome you may progress to Stage Two.

7.4. **Stage Two (Review by a Senior Manager)**

7.4.1. We will allocate a Senior Manager who will review the outcome of the complaint, and report back to you. If you are not satisfied with the Stage Two outcome you may progress to Stage Three

7.5. **Stage Three (Final Internal Stage)**

7.5.1. The Chief Executive will review the outcome of the complaint, unless the complaint concerns the Chief Executive and then this will be reviewed by the Chair of the Board of Management. This is the final internal stage of the complaints process.

7.6. **Stage Four (External)**

7.6.1. You have the right to refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or Local Authority at any stage if you so wish.

7.6.2. For contact detail see Appendix 1 for address and telephone number

This policy must be read in conjunction with other policies and does not form part of the employee's contract.

This procedure can be made available on request in other languages and in other formats.

Appendix 1

Contact details for complainants to use with this procedure

Condover College
Longbow House
Harlescott Lane
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY1 3GZ

Telephone number: 01743 872250
Email: enquires@condovercl.org.uk

Care Quality Commission (CQC) National Correspondence
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

Telephone number: 03000 616161
Website: www.cqc.org.uk

The Local Government Ombudsman

Telephone number: 0300 061 0614
Email: advice@lgo.org.uk
Website www.lgo.org.uk