

## **The Caerlow Trust Complaints Policy**

### **1. Policy statement**

The Caerlow Trust (“the Trust”) is committed to ensuring the highest standards across our organisation but recognise that sometimes, things can go wrong. We want to ensure that all of our stakeholders have a fair, consistent and accessible way of making complaints. We recognise and value feedback and believe that this can help us to improve how we deliver our work.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use
- Ensure that everyone at the Caerlow Trust knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure complaints are dealt with fairly and in a timely basis
- To make sure we have the opportunity to learn and improve what we do

### **2. Application and Scope**

For the purpose of this Policy, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction and lets us know when our stakeholders are unhappy with something.

This Complaints Policy provides guidance and processes to be followed by all The Caerlow Trust employees, volunteers and Trustees, hereafter referred to as staff.

The Caerlow Trust’s Complaints Policy applies where any stakeholder of The Caerlow Trust and members of the public wish to raise a complaint and provide us with feedback.

The Trust expects all complainants to act in good faith and to raise issues of concern that are both genuine and can be substantiated. If at any time the Trust feels that a complaint is malicious, vexatious, persistent, offensive, discriminatory or inappropriate, it will be logged but the complaints policy will not apply. Any complaints that are considered aggressive or abusive will not responded to. The Trust may liaise with legal advisors regarding complaints that appear to be of such an offensive nature that they may need to be referred to the police.

This policy does not apply to staff members wanting to complain about The Caerlow Trust, who should refer to the internal Grievance Policy instead.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Director of the Trust has overall responsibility for this policy and its operation.

The Caerlow Trust employees, volunteers and Trustees may have a number of possible roles under these Procedures. They may:

- Be the subject of a complaint
- Receive and process a complaint
- Be involved in an interview where another colleague is investigating a complaint
- Act as an investigating officer on behalf of the organisation, to investigate a complaint

Where possible, The Caerlow Trust staff should avoid having more than one of the above roles at any one time when dealing with any individual complaint. This is for purposes of clarity of roles, responsibility and to avoid any conflicts of interests. External resources may be required to enable this.

All The Caerlow Trust staff involved in a complaint must cooperate fully and promptly in any investigation. This will include informing The Caerlow Trust of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents and attending any investigative interviews. All information relating to complaints and investigations must be considered confidential.

No-one can investigate a complaint made against them. This would constitute a conflict of interest. If such a person receives a complaint and discovers that they are mentioned in the complaint, they must immediately pass the complaint to the Director. Failure to abide by this requirement will be considered gross misconduct.

#### **4. Procedures**

##### **Making a complaint**

Any complaints should be sent to the Trust in writing for the attention of the Director by email at [enquiries@thecaerlowtrust.org](mailto:enquiries@thecaerlowtrust.org) or by post to 13a Hillgate Street, London W8 7SP. If it is not possible for the complaint to be put in writing, a complaint can be made by calling 02070888272.

All complaints should include the following information:

- Full name and contact details of the complainant (unless complainants need to remain anonymous for their own safety)
- A description of the complainants relationship to the Trust
- The complaint including dates and locations of any particular incident
- The complainants desired outcome of the complaint procedure

##### **Receiving a complaint**

If a complaint is received, the member of staff receiving the complaint should:

- Ensure the complainant is aware of and has access to this complaints policy
- If received by phone, ask the complainant to send a written account by email or post. Where that is not possible, write down the facts of the complaint, including the points above.
- Notify the Director about the complaint immediately.

##### **Resolving a complaint**

###### **Stage one**

A complaint should ordinarily be acknowledged within 5 days of receipt. The receipt should include details of who is dealing with the complaint and when a full response can be expected. This should usually be within a further 10 days.

Very often, complaints can be resolved quickly and easily between the person involved in the complaint and the Director. If the complaint is complex, and requires further investigation, the

Director will decide who should investigate the matter and be the point of contact for the complainant.

## Stage two

If the complainant doesn't feel that the complaint has been appropriately resolved at stage one, they can request that the matter is considered by a Trustee. In such cases, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the Trustees who will notify all other Board members of a stage 2 complaint. The Chair will decide which Trustee will investigate the complaint. It may be themselves or they may appoint another Trustee to deal with the complaint.

At any stage, if a complaint is about a specific person, that person should be given the opportunity to respond to the matter to the Director or Trustee.

When responding to a complaint, the complainant should be informed if the complaint has been upheld or not, the work done to investigate the complaint and any actions being taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken by the Trust at this stage is final.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final decision, they can take their matter to the Charity Commission as our regulator. The Charity Commission can be contacted by [Complain about a charity - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-a-charity)

## 5. Monitoring and Review

Complaints received will be a standing agenda item on every Board meeting to review any reports received in the previous quarter.

In addition, the Director will provide an annual report on complaints for the Board, including the number of complaints received, the nature of complaints received, the timeliness of resolution and the outcomes/changes made in response to any complaints upheld. This will support the identification of any trends and support continuous learning and improvement.

The Trust will publish complaint data in its Trustees' Annual Report.