



COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Date Agreed by LDVS Senior Strategic Team:

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Version 4

1. Statement of Purpose

1.1 Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) is a service delivered in partnership by Leeds Women's Aid (LWA), Behind Closed Doors (BCD) and Womens Health Matters (WHM). All three organisations are committed to following agreed LDVS policies and procedures. LDVS is committed to providing the best possible service to both individuals and professionals in the agencies we work with.

1.2 The purpose of the Compliments and Complaints Policy is to ensure that compliments and complaints are properly administered, recorded and acknowledged and, where necessary, investigated. Also, that people lodging a complaint are treated in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner.

<p>A Compliment is an expression of satisfaction with the service provided by Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) or its employees in the course of their duties.</p>
<p>A Service request is 'a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.</p>
<p>A Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of the service provided, actions or lack of action by the Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) or its staff or those acting on its behalf affecting an individual service user or group of service users.</p>
<p>We use the term 'Service User' throughout the policy and procedure – this is a broad term and includes all people who use LDVS services including residents of our refuges and safe houses.</p>

2. Compliments and complaints about the service provision are really important to LDVS they give an indication of how well LDVS is delivering the service and help us identify areas where we can improve our practice, procedures or approach.

2.1 Principles

- At LDVS we recognise that complaints and service requests may come from service users or from professionals working in external agencies.
- We acknowledge that there will be occasions when people are not happy with some aspect of our service.

- This policy exists to make it easier for people to tell us when they are dissatisfied, or indeed when they have any comment they wish to make about LDVS.
- All complaints and service requests are taken seriously. We aim to listen and to treat people with respect and consideration throughout the complaints process.
- Professionals in external agencies should use this procedure if they are unhappy with some aspect of our service.
- Matters relating to individual service users remain confidential. In dealing with any complaint concerning the service provided to an individual service user, confidentiality and the safety of the service user will be paramount.
- We also welcome positive feedback, either verbally or written.
- The complaints policy will be publicised on the website, given to service users upon signing up to the service or on demand, discussed in service user meetings and in service user newsletters.

2.2 Who Can Complain?

- Anyone using one of our services can complain, make a service request or comment on our service in the below circumstances (see 2.3)
- Any professional using our service for guidance or consultation
- Any professional referring someone in for a service
- We will accept complaints from a member of the public who believes they have unfairly been refused a service from us. We will follow the complaints procedures and may reverse the decision, but in any case, will be unable to disclose the reason your referral has been refused.

2.3 What kind of circumstances may give rise to a complaint?

Such circumstances could include:

- You believe that you or a service user has been treated unfairly on any of the following grounds: age, marital and civil partnership status, maternity/paternity, race and ethnicity, gender or gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, religion and belief, or for any similar reason
- You believe that we have failed to provide adequate information about LDVS or its services
- You believe that we have failed to provide an appropriate service
- You believe that you have experienced an unreasonable delay in receiving a service
- You believe that a service provided to you or a service user has been inadequate
- You believe that our staff have been rude or unhelpful to you or a service user
- You disagree with a decision we have made or a policy that we operate
- You believe that LDVS's values have not been upheld

2.4 What kind of matters may not be accepted:

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago, but we may use our discretion to include some complaints that are outside of this. It may also be

appropriate to exclude any complaints that concern safeguarding or health and safety issues.

- Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.
- Where we do not accept a complaint, we will provide the complainant with reasons for the refusal.

2.5 Third Party Complaints

- Matters relating to individual service users remain confidential. In dealing with any complaint concerning the service provided to an individual service user, confidentiality and the safety of the service user will be paramount. This principle also applies to former service users.
- Workers, Staff, Senior Leaders and Trustees will not enter into any discussion with any third party concerning the details of the service provided to any individual service user, or former service user, unless the complainant is acting on behalf of and with the explicit and recorded permission of the service user.
- Additionally, Workers, Staff, Senior Leaders or Trustees will not enter into any discussion with any third party whom the service user/former service user has previously alleged to be a perpetrator of domestic violence or abuse, even if the service user has given that person permission to act on their behalf.
- At no stage of any Third-Party complaint under consideration may the complainant be accompanied by any person whom the service user/former service user has previously alleged to be a perpetrator of domestic violence or abuse.

3. Compliments Procedure

3.1 What should I do if I wish to compliment LDVS, or just make a suggestion or comment about something?

- LDVS welcomes all comments and suggestions and tries, wherever possible, to take account of these when developing our services. Please email, telephone, or write to us, or use the service user satisfaction surveys to tell us about how we can improve our services. We would also like you to let us know of any positive experiences you have had.

4. Service Requests

4.1 What is the difference between a complaint and a service request?

- Service requests are generally the initial contact you make with us where you ask us to fix a problem or ask for a service.
- Where service requests are made, we aim to resolve the matter quickly but the issue will still be recorded, monitored and reviewed.
- Service requests are not complaints however failure to meet service request can lead to a complaint.

5. Complaints Procedure

5.1 What should I do to complain?

- Where service requests are made, we aim to resolve the matter quickly but the issue will still be recorded, monitored and reviewed in the same way as a complaint.
- You may complain in person to any member of staff or by telephone, email, text, Whatsapp or use the attached complaints form if you prefer. If you need help to make a complaint, you can be supported by a friend, family or agency.
- We will listen to what you have to say, apologise whenever necessary, and try to agree a solution with you.
- All other instances of complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction whether the word complaint is used or not will be dealt with as a complaint.
- Useful contacts are given at the end of this policy.

6.0 What will happen after I complain?

6.1 LDVS will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receiving the complaint. This will usually be done by email, so it is important that you provide us with your correct email if you prefer us to reply by post please make tell us this and make sure you give your full postal address. This email/letter will also tell you what steps will be taken to investigate your complaint.

6.2 We will usually want to speak to you by phone or in person to discuss the problem (in which case you are welcome to be accompanied by a person of your choice from outside LDVS if you are a service user).

6.3 We will allocate responsibility for this meeting and for investigating the complaint to the appropriate manager.

6.4 If your complaint is about a member of staff, it will be passed immediately to the appropriate manager, who will write to you to tell you that this has been done and to explain that our internal inquiry process has begun.

6.5 We aim to resolve all complaints quickly, and to keep you informed throughout the process. You will receive a full written response within 10 working days of the acknowledgement letter. If there is likely to be any further delay, you will be informed but should the delay be longer than a further 10 days we will let you know the reason for the additional delay. This letter will include information on what to do if you are still dissatisfied.

7. Will my complaint be confidential?

7.1 Your complaint may be seen by managers; Trustees of the partner organisations of LDVS as part of the investigation process; or the property owners where the complaint is about the building or repairs for which they have a responsibility, but we will make every effort to safeguard your privacy. Your complaint will not become “public knowledge” unless you so wish. You should be aware, however, that if your complaint were specifically about a member of staff or a Trustee of an LDVS organisation, it would be necessary for that person to be told that a complaint has been lodged against them, to allow the investigation to proceed. They may also need to know the substance of the complaint.

8. What if I am still unhappy – can I appeal?

8.1 You can escalate your complaint to Stage 2 of our complaint process if you are dissatisfied about the decision made; about the way your complaint has been handled; or about any aspect of the procedure outlined above, including the final response. The response to stage 1 of your complaint will inform you to whom you should address the escalation.

8.2 You cannot go directly to Stage 2 unless you have used the first stage of the complaints procedure.

8.3 You can use your preferred method to contact us with the stage 2 escalation request or use the attached complaint form.

8.4 In some instances, where the service user is in our refuge service, the complaint may be passed to the landlord RP at this stage to complete the complaint investigation, but we will advise you where this happens. They will abide by the timescales in 8 below.

8.5 Again, service users can obtain assistance to escalate to Stage 2., as explained above. Please mark all correspondence as “private and confidential”

9. What will happen if I escalate to Stage 2?

9.1 You will receive written acknowledgement of your escalation request, within 5 working days. A senior member of staff who was not involved with the initial complaint, will carry out the Stage 2 investigations.

9.2 Your escalation request and the original complaint will be considered in detail, and you will receive a written response within 20 working days of the acknowledgment letter.

10. What if I am still dissatisfied following an appeal?

10.1 Stage 2 is the final step in the LDVS internal complaints process. If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of Stage 2, you have the right to contact:

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman;

Adult and Health Compliments and complaints in Leeds City Council, who fund the LDVS service;

or if it is an accommodation issue for example about disrepair, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman as detailed below.

Useful Information

The complaint can be sent:

By email to: complaints@ldvs.uk

If you choose, you may use the attached form, but all complaints are treated the same and the format does not have any bearing on the outcome.

By post to: Complaints Department, Leeds Domestic Violence Service, c/o PO BOX 420 LEEDS LS14 9JX, marking the envelope clearly "Private & Confidential".

Please give us as much information as you can.

Additionally you can ask for assistance with your complaint from the following:

Leeds Citizens Advice Bureau 0808 278 7878

Advonet (provides a range of advocacy services) 0113 222 0606

You are, of course, entitled to take your complaint to the most appropriate organisation from the outset without using the LDVS complaints procedure at all. However, we would encourage you to lodge your complaint with us first and allow us to try to resolve the issues causing concern.

Leeds City Council website [Adults and health compliments and complaints \(leeds.gov.uk\)](http://leeds.gov.uk),
Email complaints.socs@leeds.gov.uk

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman: 0300 061 0614
Website (including a complaint webform): www.lgo.org.uk

For residents/service users in refuge complaining about the accommodation,

Write

Housing

PO

Liverpool

L33 7WQ

Ombudsman

Box

to:

Service

152

:

Complaint form: Fill in the [online complaint form](#)

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Phone: [0300 111 3000](tel:03001113000)

Calls are recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

LDVS Complaints Form

Using this form is optional, you may telephone, email text or whatsapp if this is your preferred communication method; how you complain will have not bearing on the outcome.

Name

Address

Mobile Phone

Email address

Agency if from an external agency

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form LWA is committed to promoting equality and providing a fair service to all groups of people. These questions are intended to help us find out about that. The information you give us will be kept confidential and will only be used for statistical purposes only. You do not have to answer all the questions or complete the form if you do not want to and it will not affect your access to the service or how we treat you. Please circle the appropriate answer.

Please return the completed form to complaints@ldvs.uk

Sex and gender identity

What is your sex?

Female Male Prefer not to say

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Yes No Prefer not to say

If the gender you identify with is not the same as your sex registered at birth, please write in:

Age 16-24 25-29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54
55-59 60-64 65+ Prefer not to say

What is your ethnicity?

Ethnic origin is not about nationality, place of birth or citizenship. It is about the group to which you perceive you belong. Please tick the appropriate box

Asian or Asian British

Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Chinese Prefer not to say

Any other Asian background, please write in:

Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

African Caribbean Prefer not to say

Any other Black, African or Caribbean background, please write in:

Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean White and Black African White and Asian

Prefer not to say Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background, please write in:

White

English Welsh Scottish Northern Irish Irish

British Gypsy or Irish Traveller Prefer not to say

Any other White background, please write in:

Other ethnic group

Arab Prefer not to say Any other ethnic group, please write in:

Do you consider yourself to have a disability or health condition?

Yes No Prefer not to say

What is the effect or impact of your disability or health condition on your work? Please write in here:

The information in this form is for monitoring purposes only. If you believe you need a 'reasonable adjustment', then please discuss this with your manager, or the manager running the recruitment process if you are a job applicant.

What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual Gay Lesbian Bisexual Asexual Pansexual Undecided
Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use your own identity, please write in:

What is your religion or belief?

No religion or belief Buddhist Christian Hindu Jewish
Muslim Sikh Prefer not to say If other religion or belief, please write in:

What is your working pattern?

Full-time Part-time Prefer not to say

What is your flexible working arrangement?

None Flexi-time Staggered hours Term-time hours
Annualised hours Job-share Flexible shifts Compressed hours
Homeworking Prefer not to say If other, please write in:

Do you have caring responsibilities? If yes, please tick all that apply

None
Primary carer of a child/children (under 18)
Primary carer of disabled child/children
Primary carer of disabled adult (18 and over)
Primary carer of older person
Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)
Prefer not to say

What is your complaint?

(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Ideally, what would you like LDVS to do about your complaint?

Your Signature:

(if sent by email
please type your

Date

Please return the form by email to: complaints@ldvs.uk

Or by post to: The Complaints Department,
PO Box 420, Leeds, LS14 9JX

Please mark the email/envelope "Private & Confidential".

Stage 2 Complaint

Stage 2 can only be started after Stage 1 (initial complaint process) has been completed. It is not necessary to use this form to escalate to stage 2 if you prefer other communication methods.

Name:

Address

Please explain why you are dissatisfied by the out come of your complaint?

Please indicate when you are generally available for us to contact you

Your Signature:

(if sent by email
please type your name)

Date

Please return the form by email to: complaints@ldvs.uk

Or by post to: The Complaints Department,
PO Box 420, Leeds, LS14 9JX

Please mark the email/envelope "Private & Confidential".