

Customer Care & Complaints Policy

- Principle:** Woman's Trust aims to provide a quality service to all clients and other external stakeholders. We welcome all comments and feedback on our performance in order to ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard. There may however be occasions when clients and other external stakeholder are unhappy with the service they receive and if so must be referred to this complaints procedure.
- Purpose:** This policy sets out Woman's Trust Customer care charter as well as procedures for complaints.
- Applies to:** Clients and any other external stakeholders, Woman's Trust staff and volunteers

1. Customer Care Charter

All clients and other stakeholder contact should be provided in the most appropriate format.

We will ensure that services are provided:

- as quickly as possible, however in regard to the Counselling service this is subject to waiting list times
- in accordance with our Equal Opportunities policy
- in a courteous, helpful manner.

We will always:

- be open and honest and explain our decisions
- ensure that staff take responsibility for resolving or dealing with queries, or that they refer it to an appropriate colleague
- give as much information as possible to help our clients/customers make informed choices
- act in accordance with the law and best practice.

We would like our clients and other external stakeholders to:

- provide us with accurate information when making complaints
- treat all our staff fairly and with respect
- give us their views and suggestions to help us to improve our services.
- keep any appointments that you have with us.

Face to face contact

We will:

- we will try to ensure sure that the buildings we use for our service provision are accessible for our customer needs.
- greet visitors and introduce ourselves within a maximum of five minutes of their appointment time
- respect your privacy, offering private areas for discussion if required
- listen to you and respond to your needs

- be welcoming, courteous and helpful at all times

Contact by telephone

We will aim to answer the telephone within 20 seconds (six rings) during normal working hours. If we are not able to answer the phone you will be able to leave a message on our answer machines. We will answer the call as soon as the appropriate person is available.

We will attempt to resolve your query at the first point of contact. If this is not possible we will pass your call to someone who can help and ensure that you have the name of the staff member dealing with the query.

Contact in writing by letter or email

We will:

- aim to respond to standard written enquiries within five working days (one week) of receipt, resolving the issues raised if at all possible. If the issue is more complicated and likely to take longer to resolve, we will give you an idea of how long this will take.
- ensure that where service areas have other specific targets regarding written correspondence, for example, Booking of Initial assessment, that client of these services are aware of the relevant standards that apply.
- ensure that within the response provided clients/customers are given a named contact of the staff member dealing with the issue.

What we ask of you

Woman's Trust staff should not be expected to deal with rude, abusive or threatening behaviour. If such unpleasant behaviour is encountered and cannot be calmed down, staff will politely state that they will have to terminate the contact (put the telephone down/leave the meeting etc). Woman's Trust will take appropriate action against any individuals who are abusive to staff. Woman's Trust might withdraw or not offer services if such unpleasant behaviour cannot be changed.

Delivering an effective service to customers with different needs

All our customers have the right to expect the same level of service. Woman's Trust should be careful not to make assumptions about people's needs or abilities but should consult them to identify their needs. We will make every attempt to supply information and support in an appropriate format and we will make sure that disabled people and people whose first language is not English can access appropriate services where possible where we are not able to accommodate the need.

Making Customer care a success

This policy sets out Woman's Trust commitment to its customers. In order for us to learn and improve our services we want to use the feedback from the contact that we have to make changes.

We will do this by:

- publicising our standards to our customers
- regular consultation of our users
- introducing internal monitoring to help all our services meet the standards
- supporting and training staff to provide better customer service
- monitoring our complaints to identify where we need to make improvements.

2. Complaints

2.1. What is a complaint

A complaint is defined as an expression of grievance, whether in writing, telephone, email, in person or by proxy by any person using or having business in any way with the organisation. All complaints will be dealt with fairly and consistently.

Examples for complaints might be

- that the service you received was poor
- that we took too long to respond to your initial request
- that we have given you inaccurate information
- that we have treated you unfairly or discourteously in any way
- that we have referred you elsewhere inappropriately
- that we have discriminated against you

2.2. How to make a complaint

Try to register your complaint very quickly – things can often be dealt with more efficiently straight away.

If you are unhappy with an individual at Woman's Trust sometimes it is best to tell her directly. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate then speak to the staff member's Manager or CEO.

In the first instance you might want to call us and discuss the best way to register your complaint. It may be helpful to talk to the Manager of the team you have been dealing with so she can look into what has happened more closely and try to resolve the issue with you. You may also call our CEO to discuss your concern with her. If you would rather not discuss the matter then you can submit your complaint in writing. Woman's Trust will bear the cost of translating complaints into English if appropriate.

Your written complaint should be sent to:

The CEO
Woman's Trust
PO Box 70420
London
NW1W 7QL

If the complaint is about the CEO please address the complaint to: THE CHAIR

Please mark the envelope 'Private & Confidential' if you do not want anyone else to open it. You can use the attached complaint form or write a separate letter if you prefer.

All written complaints will be logged. Woman's Trust will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days except for exceptional circumstances (e.g. If the office is closed for an extended period.)

The CEO or Chair will liaise with the appropriate staff within the organisation and agree a strategy for investigating the complaint. You will be informed of what that strategy is.

If further information is required in order to progress with the investigation of the complaint then the Chair will contact you for this.

The CEO or Chair will let you know how your complaint has been dealt with as soon as possible but usually within 21 days of receipt of the complaint.

Is there anything else I can do if I am still not happy?

Yes – you can contact us and explain why you are unhappy. We would then be happy to meet with you and an advocate, whom you nominate, to discuss the matter further and try to agree on a resolution.

If your complaint concerns the professional standards of the Counselling service you might also want to refer to the BACP complaints procedure (http://www.bacp.co.uk/prof_conduct/index.php or call BACP on 01455 883300).

We will do our best to respond constructively and creatively to complaints and where possible and appropriate to change our practice.

3. Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Complaint Form

| | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------------|--|
| First Name | | Second Name | |
| Address | | | |
| Telephone | Home | Work | |
| <i>Please write your complaint here. Remember to include; any important dates, time, places, who was involved and exactly what happened. Continue over the page if you need to.</i> | | | |
| Signed | | Dated | |