

PAVO COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

People are reluctant to complain but only by knowing what has gone wrong will we be able to continually improve in the future

Policy Statement

PAVO is committed to providing excellent customer service to everyone who is affected by its operation. We do not look at complaints as unwanted and we are firmly committed to a process of continuous improvement, of which the complaints procedure is just one element.

Recognising that sometimes things go wrong and that mistakes are made, this document outlines the procedures to follow to make a complaint or comment and the internal procedures we follow to manage the process of resolving these.

This procedure and the associated PAVO Complaint Form are available on the PAVO web site <https://www.pavo.org.uk/about-pavo/comments-compliments-complaints.html> <https://www.pavo.org.uk/cy/cefndir-pavo/sylwadau-cwynion-a-chanmoliadau.html> and are highlighted in an information leaflet that is available at all PAVO offices. They will form part of the induction process for staff, volunteers and trustees. Should anyone wish to make a complaint they will be provided with the link to the website or, if requested, a hard or email copy of the procedure and the form will be sent to them.

Regular statistical reports will be provided to the Board.

Objectives

The objectives of this complaints procedure are to ensure that:-

- any complaints that are received are investigated at the appropriate level in the organisation
- all complaints are actioned in the most expeditious way
- persons making a complaint know how their complaint will be dealt with

- wherever possible, lessons are learned.

Definition of Customer

For the purposes of this procedure, customers are defined as anyone who has any dealing with the organisation, excluding staff and volunteers, who are asked to raise issues either with their line manager, volunteer supervisor or through the internal grievance procedure. Trustees are also excluded from this procedure; any specific concerns that they may have should be raised with the Chair.

Misunderstandings

Even if customers do not regard a particular concern as a 'complaint', PAVO would still like to be informed about it, as it may help us deal with something that we would otherwise overlook. The smaller things that go wrong or small misunderstandings can often be put right very quickly. We want to know about these; we want customers to get an acceptable solution very quickly but we also need to learn from the process.

In striving for excellent customer service, we realise that this is a high standard and in order to meet it we need to be made aware of even the most minor failing. To ensure that customers do not feel that a relatively minor issue is not worth raising as a complaint, we will take active steps to encourage comment and constructive criticism at every level.

Training will be provided to all staff in dealing with all reported issues and misunderstandings. This training will include an empowerment to immediately resolve, if this is possible, any issue not raised as a complaint where our service level has not met our customer's expectations.

Members of staff will record all issues dealt with in this way. The customer's name will not be included and the staff member will make an objective judgement on the cause of the problem, which will be analysed on a regular basis as part of our process of continuous improvement.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is defined, for the purpose of this procedure, as a written submission of a PAVO Complaint Form, compiled by any customer of PAVO, that is sent to the appropriate person to be registered and where the originator has received an acknowledgement.

To clarify, the definition of a complaint does not include a comment provided by individuals asking for a simple remedy to a minor problem, as described under Misunderstandings above. These will not be subject to the full Complaints Process detailed below.

Integrity

During the process of dealing with a complaint we will be as open and transparent as possible. Customers raising complaints will be given full information about the progress of their complaint except in the following cases:-

- If the complaint involves questions about the actions or competencies of individual members of staff or trustees, other processes may subsume the complaints procedure and PAVO may not be able to provide the person raising the complaint with all the relevant information. For instance, employment legislation may prevent publication of the results of disciplinary processes.
- The legal requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowers) may restrict the information that can be provided to persons raising complaints.

If either of these situations occurs the Chief Executive will provide as full an explanation as possible to the customer without disclosing any restricted information.

To ensure confidentiality, information about the progress of a complaint will only be provided to the person making the complaint.

Complaints Process

Customers making formal complaints are asked to complete a PAVO Complaint Form, with an explanation of the issue that has caused them to be dissatisfied. A complaint should also contain an explanation of what the customer making the complaint requires to be done to resolve the issue. Submission of the Complaints Form is the preferred method as it will provide PAVO with all of the information necessary to deal appropriately with the concern.

Complaints should be sent or forwarded to the Senior Officer for Internal Services so that they may be registered.

The Senior Officer for Internal Services will send an acknowledgement to the customer by return giving a complaint registration number. Inclusion of this registration number in any further correspondence will assist PAVO and would be appreciated.

The Senior Officer for Internal Services will refer each complaint to an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team for the first review, unless such a person is specifically mentioned in the complaint, in which case it will be referred to the Chief Executive or a Trustee of the organisation.

All correspondence relating to complaints will be treated as confidential.

When the first reviewer has considered the detail of the complaint, the customer raising the complaint will receive a written response within 28 days of the receipt of the original complaint, detailing any proposed remedial action. Should this not be possible, the Senior Officer for Internal Services will explain the reasons for this in writing to the customer within the requisite 28 days.

The customer raising the complaint will also be informed in the written response that they may request a second review.

If a second review is requested by the customer, the matter will be referred to a more senior person within PAVO. This may be the Chair, a Trustee or the Chief Executive as appropriate.

Following the second review, the customer raising the complaint will be provided with a further written response within 28 days of the second request, detailing any changes to the previously proposed remedial action. In the majority of cases the second review will be the final position of PAVO. However, this further response will also indicate if, and how, the complaint can be progressed beyond this second stage.

Further progressing of a complaint beyond the second review will depend on the nature of the matter. The Charity Commission has a list of the types of issues that it would be willing to investigate; similarly PAVO has an investigation procedure that it will instigate in some circumstances.

Other alternative routes include referring the matter to the police, Trading Standards, the Health and Safety Executive or other appropriate body or a funding body if the service being complained about was funded directly by such a body. The response from the second review will explain all relevant options.

If an accusation is made that this procedure has not been followed, the matter can be raised for discussion at a meeting of the Trustees by contacting the Chair of PAVO. The Trustees meeting will not consider the substantive matter because this may invalidate the second review process, but may refer the whole matter back to the first review stage and ask for a report to ensure that the full procedure has been followed.

If at any stage the customer making the complaint wishes to stop a complaint from being progressed, they may do so by writing to or emailing the Senior Officer for Internal Services.

PAVO nonetheless reserves the right to continue to investigate serious complaints in these circumstances.

Results of Complaints

The Board will receive a report at least once a year detailing the number of complaints that have been received, the general nature of the problems and the remedial actions that have been taken. The Board may, at their discretion, require more frequent reports.

Continuous Improvement

PAVO strives to be a learning organisation and to continually develop quality improvement procedures, which will include information and learning derived from this process.

PAVO would appreciate and will actively solicit feedback from complainants about their experience of PAVO's complaints procedure and may use this to improve the way that complaints are managed in the future.