

# COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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### **1.0 STATEMENT**

- 1.1 Royal Voluntary Service (“the Charity”) recognises that it is only with the support of its volunteers, employees and service users that it can succeed in its mission to inspire and enable people to give the gift of voluntary service to meet the needs of the day in their communities. It is therefore vital for the Charity to know when things go wrong so that it can try and put things right and improve its activities. Feedback on positive experiences is also welcomed – the Charity can use that feedback to recognise and reward good practice and to encourage similar experiences for others.
- 1.2 If and when things do go wrong, the Charity believes that it is best to deal with things straightaway before they grow into a big issue. The Charity also believes that complaints should be addressed in ways that are professional, practical, personal and positive so that complaints can be satisfactorily resolved and the same issue avoided in the future.

### **2.0 AIMS OF THIS POLICY**

#### **2.1 This Policy aims to:**

- provide a clear, easy to use and readily available guide to the way in which the Charity will handle complaints and compliments so that individuals know how to make a complaint and everyone at the Charity knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- ensure that all complaints are investigated fairly, consistently and promptly;
- ensure that complaints are resolved in a courteous, professional and positive way; and
- help the Charity gather information to help it continually improve the way it works.

### 3.0 WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

- 3.1 The Charity believes that it is better to apply a wider definition of what counts as a “complaint” than a narrower one; that way the Charity has the opportunity to hear more about how well it is or isn’t performing. Any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the Charity and received from a volunteer, service user or other member of the public will therefore be treated as a complaint unless it relates to:
- a general enquiry about the work of the Charity or a request for information about us;
  - a contractual or legal dispute;
  - a formal request for disclosure of information for example under data protection legislation;
  - the immediate resolution of a minor query or day to day dissatisfaction which may be dealt with on a day to day basis at a local level;
  - a personal grievance from an employee when the Charity’s Grievance Policy and Procedure should be used;
  - a formal incident, for example incidents regarding safeguarding, food hygiene, health and safety, fraud, theft, major financial, system or process irregularities, property or vehicle damage or burglary when the relevant incident reporting process should be used;
  - an activity where we are delivering services on behalf of another organisation, such as a Local Authority or the NHS and where there may be other arrangements in place that are better suited to handling the matter in which case we will let you know the relevant detail;
  - serious concerns about fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing when the Charity’s Whistleblowing Policy should be used.
- 3.2 If there is concern about possible abuse of a vulnerable person or someone is at risk of immediate harm then call 999. If the risk is not immediate then contact our safeguarding team on Tel: 07760 171577 or e-mail [safeguarding@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) and follow the Charity’s Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

### 4.0 HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

- 4.1 We believe that it is best to deal with complaints straightaway rather than let them grow into a big issue. If you have a complaint then please raise it as soon as you can with the person you are dealing with so that they may try to resolve it for you there and then. If there are lessons to be learned, then that person will make sure they are reported to their line manager to action as appropriate.
- 4.2 If the matter cannot be dealt with this way (perhaps because of a conflict of interest or confidentiality issues) or the matter needs more serious attention, then please contact the Charity in the way that suits you best using any of the following (*If you are unable to do this yourself, you should seek assistance from someone who can do this for you, but you should ensure that they explain how they have obtained your consent*):

E-mail us: [Comments@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:Comments@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)

Telephone us: 0330 555 0315

Write to us: Comments, Volunteer Support Team, Royal Voluntary Service, Beck Court, Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff, CF23 8RP.

### **For Fundraising activities**

Email us: [fundraising@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)

Telephone us: 0800 731 9197

Write to us: Supporter Engagement Team, Royal Voluntary Service, 126 Fairlie Road, Slough Berkshire SL1 4PY

### **For NHS Volunteer Responder:**

NHSVR [ProblemSolving@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:ProblemSolving@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)

NHSVR: 0808 196 3382

Write to us: Comments NHSVR, Volunteer Support Team, Royal Voluntary Service, Beck Court, Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff, CF23 8RP.

- 4.3 We will be better able to handle your complaint if you give us as much information as you can – your name and contact details so that we may respond to you together with other relevant details, for example, details of the activity that is the cause of your complaint, any information about steps that you have already taken to try to clear up the matter, the names of anyone involved and any relevant dates.
- 4.4 It is easier for all to look into a complaint if it is made straightaway when recollections are fresh and information is easier to recall. For this reason, if a complaint has not been raised within 6 months we will consider that the issue has either been satisfactorily resolved or that there is no wish to take it further. If however you have been trying to raise your complaint locally without proper response, or if there are other good reasons, we understand that there may be times when this may be extended.
- 4.5 If you are expressing a complaint on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement before we are able to respond to you on their behalf.
- 4.6 However you raise a complaint, we will do our best to help.

## **5.0 ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR COMPLAINT**

- 5.1 We will formally acknowledge your complaint within 10 working days of receiving it. If you have not received an acknowledgement, allowing for postal delays, within this timescale please telephone 0330 555 0315 to check that your original complaint has been received.

If your complaint is in regard to fundraising activities, we will acknowledge your complaint within 2 working days of receiving it. If you have not received an acknowledgement, allowing for postal delays, within this timescale please telephone 0800 731 9197 to check that your original complaint has been received.

- 5.2 Our acknowledgement will tell you which department or individual is responsible for considering and replying to the complaint or, if it's a simple matter, the conclusion to your complaint.
- 5.3 We will reply to you by email or by letter, depending on how you communicated with us and, if you have provided a telephone number, we may use that to call you to discuss.
- 5.4 If the complaint is already being handled under another Royal Voluntary Service procedure (for example, the Disciplinary or Grievance Procedures), you will be advised that your complaint has been passed to the individual who is already dealing with it.

## **6.0 WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US**

- 6.1 Where a complaint is made, you can expect the Charity to take the complaint seriously and to treat it in an open, honest and fair way. We prefer to hear about issues and so you should feel free to raise a complaint without fear of disadvantage or repercussion.
- 6.2 Each complaint is likely to be unique and will therefore be handled in a way that reflects the nature of the complaint. Looking into a complaint may involve us doing some or all of the following:
- designating somebody to look into the complaint;
  - contacting or meeting you so that you can talk through your complaint in more detail and/or tell us what you are hoping for as an outcome from your complaint;
  - gathering information and establishing facts in order to get back to you;
  - providing written or verbal updates on the progress of the complaint, including reasons why it might take longer than anticipated to resolve;
  - letting you know our conclusion(s) about your complaint including what we have found and an explanation of how and why we reached those conclusions.
- 6.2 If we find that we got things wrong, then we will acknowledge that, explain why and show that we understand how our error affected you. If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again. If we got something wrong, we will always apologise.
- 6.3 If we are unable to explain the outcome of our review of a complaint for reasons of confidentiality then we will explain this in our response.
- 6.4 If you are unhappy with our response then you may write to or email the Chief Executive's Office within 5 working days of receiving our response (if you are unable to do this yourself, you should seek assistance from someone who can do this for you, but you should ensure that they explain how they have obtained your consent). Your letter/email should set out the reasons why you feel further consideration of your complaint is merited and should be addressed to Chief Executive's Office, Royal Voluntary Service, Beck Court, Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff, CF23 8RP or [Escalation@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:Escalation@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk). The Chief Executive Officer will consider and may allocate another member of staff to consider your complaint. If so that member of staff will respond to you with the conclusions of their review

into your complaint within 21 working days of receipt of your letter/email to the Chief Executive Officer.

- 6.5 The Charity would very much like to resolve complaints itself and would always like to be given the chance to do that. If however, after following this Policy, a complaint remains unresolved then the Charity will signpost a complainant to other organisations that might help including for example the Charity Commission, OSCR and specifically, in relation to fundraising or data, The Fundraising Regulator and the Information Commissioner's Office respectively.

## **7.0 WHAT WE EXPECT OF YOU**

- 7.1 We believe that complainants have the right to be heard, understood, and respected, and we recognise that the circumstances leading up to your complaint may cause you to be upset, distressed, or angry.
- 7.2 However, we also have a duty of care for the people working for the Charity. We therefore expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with the Charity and its staff and volunteers. While it may be appropriate for you to be forceful, determined or persistent to get your point across, we will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.
- 7.3 Our staff and volunteers are authorised to end any telephone call or written communication where they suffer abusive language.

## **8.0 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED INTERNALLY**

- 8.1 A complaint that is received by anyone in the Charity should be forwarded to the Volunteer Support Team - [comments@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:comments@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) or if in relation to fundraising activity to the Fundraising Team – [fundraising@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) - so that the Teams can log the complaint, issue an acknowledgement to the complainant and address the complaint in line with this Policy. Matters that are of particular sensitivity may, at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer, be held separately by the Chief Executive Officer's Office.

## **9.0 WHEN A COMPLAINT WON'T BE ACTIONED**

- 9.1 In very rare circumstances the Charity will not action a complaint or respond to a complainant. This may happen when:
- a complaint is submitted anonymously. Whilst the complaint will still be considered the anonymous nature of it will prevent a response being given;
  - a complaint is about something with which the Charity has no direct connection. The Charity may wish to address the point but will have no obligation to;
  - someone unreasonably continues to pursue a complaint which the Charity has already considered and responded in line with this Policy;
  - anyone is abusive, prejudiced or offensive in their manner or harasses a volunteer, employee, trustee or anyone connected with the Charity;

- a complaint is used as a mechanism to create disharmony to the Charity or an individual;
- a complaint is incoherent or illegible or forms part of a “round robin” or group mailing.

9.2 Where a complainant persists in pursuing a complaint despite their complaint having been considered and addressed in line with this Policy, the Charity will not continue to direct charitable resources to resolving the complaint. If the complainant continues to raise complaint, the Charity may choose to terminate service delivery or volunteering opportunity.

## 10. LEARNING LESSONS

10.1 The Charity’s Leadership Team will regularly consider reports on complaints and compliments including more serious issues raised, trends in terms of numbers of complaints or in particular areas and on the actions taken; the aim being to improve the Charity’s offering to all involved with the Charity and to improve standards and performance. High level reports may be reported to the Charity’s Audit and Risk Committee.

### 11.0 COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND POSITIVE FEEDBACK

11.1 The Charity also welcome compliments, comments and positive feedback about the Charity, its activities and its volunteers and staff. These can be a wonderful way in which to help the Charity recognise individuals or local groups and compliments and/or positive feedback can be submitted in any of the following ways:

E-mail us: [Comments@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:Comments@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)

Call us: 0330 555 0315

Write to us: Comments, Volunteer Support Team, Royal Voluntary Service, Beck Court, Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff, CF23 8RP

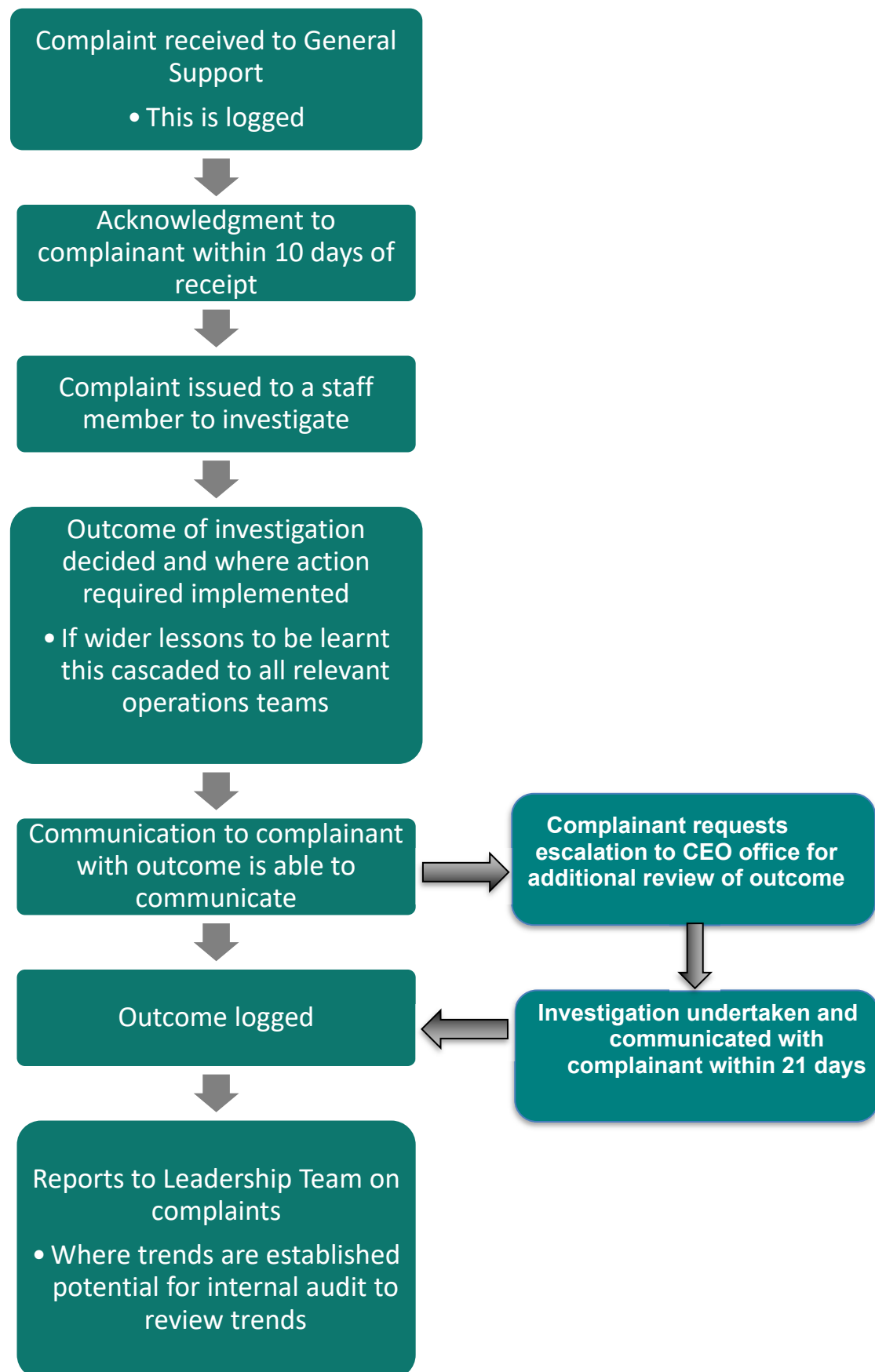
11.2 Compliments, comments and/or positive feedback will be shared internally with those mentioned and may be shared with their line manager(s) as appropriate.

## 12.0 SHARING THIS POLICY AND REVIEW

12.1 We have created this Policy so that we can improve on what we do. This Policy will therefore be made publicly available by publishing a copy of it on the Charity’s website.

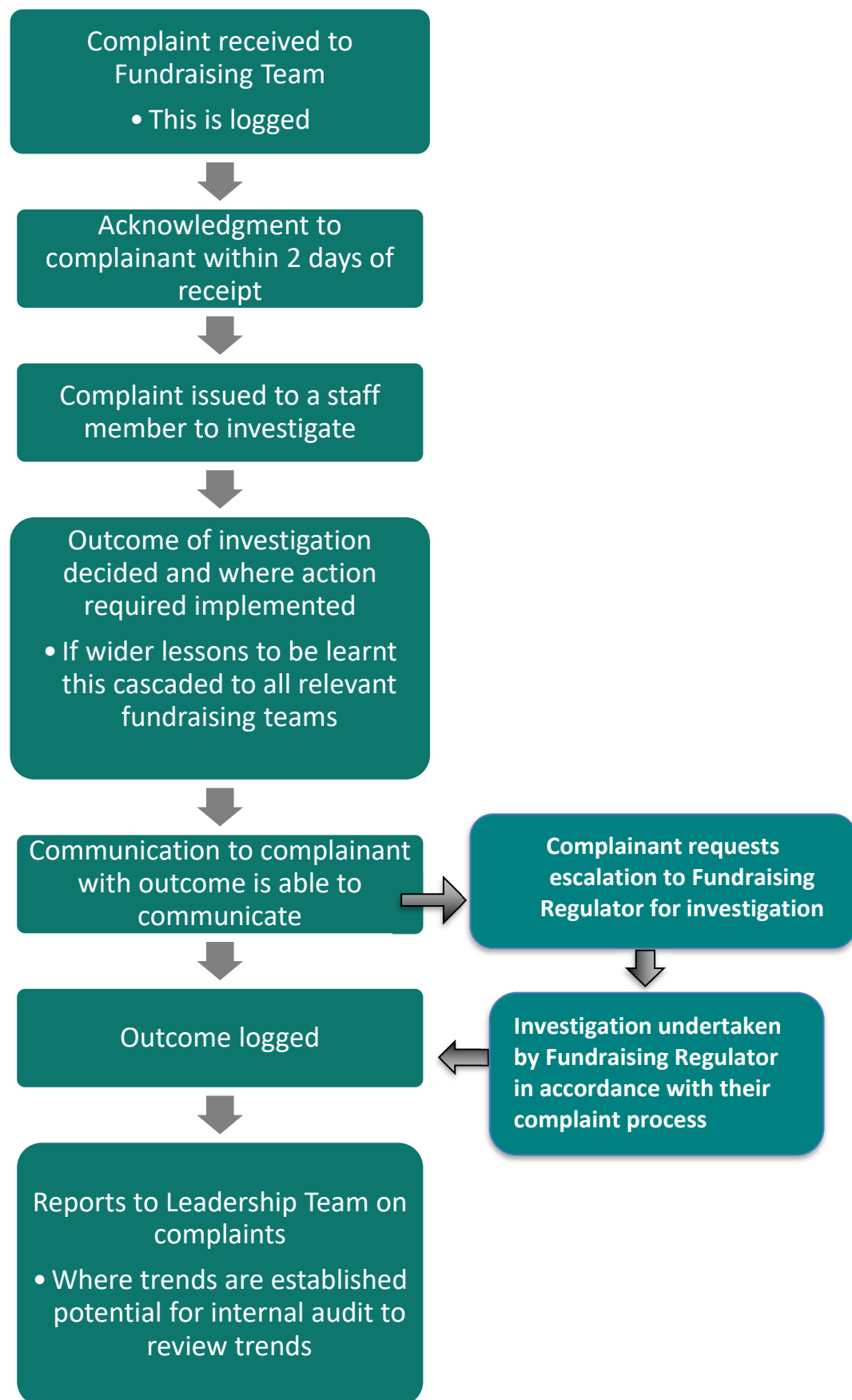
12.2 This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required.

## ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

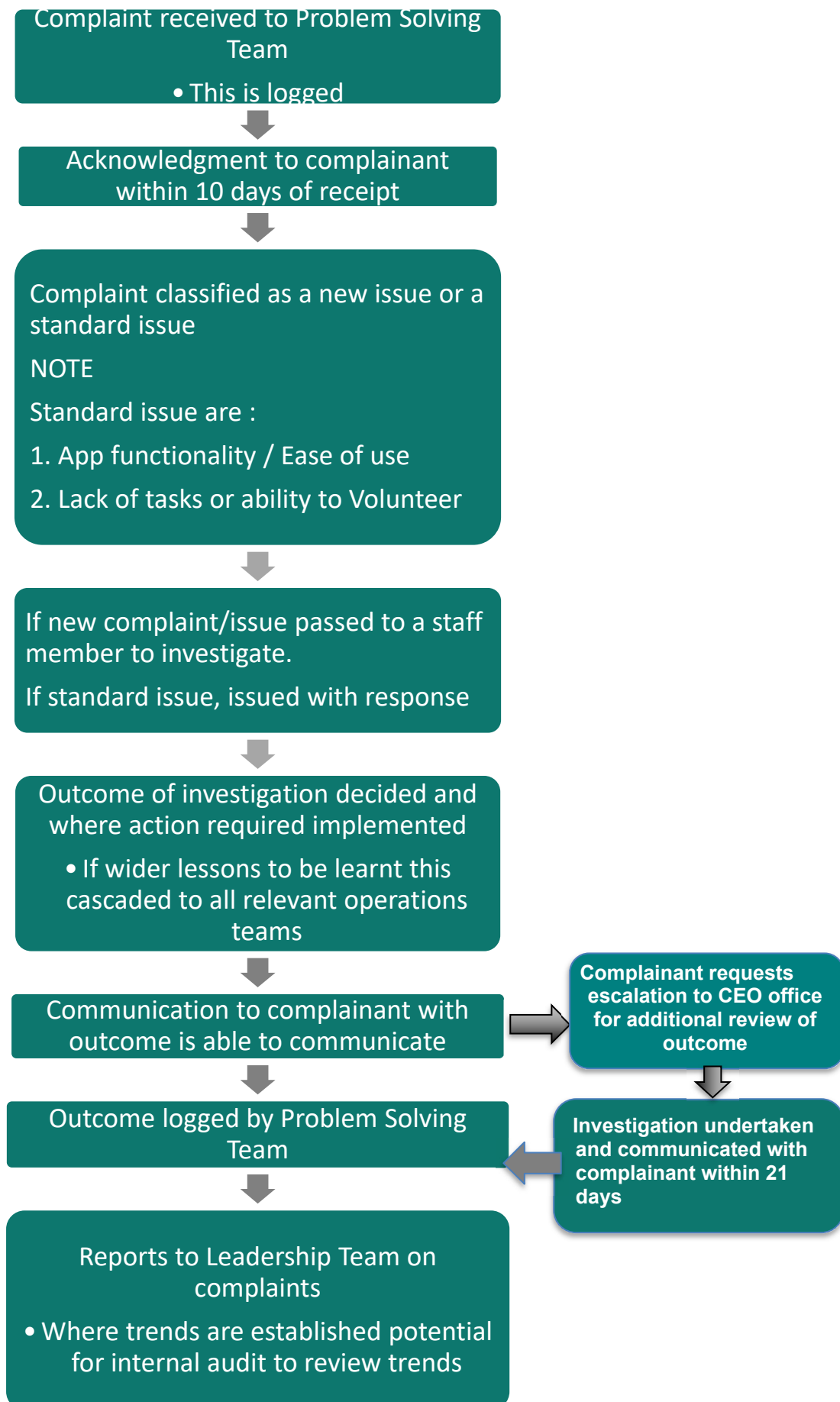




## FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



## NHS VOLUNTEER RESPONDERS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



## DOCUMENT CONTROL

This table outlines the changes to this document. Always make sure you are working from the latest version which can be found on the Document Library.

Version	Date of issue	Section reference	Reason for change	Owner of change
V1.0	October 2018	All	New	Rebecca Kennelly
V2.0	November 2018	All	Email address for Volunteer Support Team	Laura Morgan
V4.0	August 2020	All	NHS Volunteer Responders Complaints Procedure added	Rebecca Kennelly
V4.1	July 2021	Footers	Remove document owner reference to RK	Catherine Nightingale
V4.2	October 2022	All	3 yearly review complete. Escalation to CEO office digitally and review period updated.	Laura Morgan

### Reference Documents



Any documents referred to throughout this process can be found on the Document Library.

Document name	Document type	Information	Owner
Compliments, Complaints And Comments Overview	Process	Poster displaying process and contact information	Head of Governance