



# Black Country Women's Aid

*We listen, we support, we care*

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Complaints Policy Statement</b>
<b>Policy last updated</b>	April 2022
<b>Policy Author</b>	Wendy Sims
<b>Policy applies to</b>	Staff, volunteers, service users or any person who has contact with BCWA
<b>Policy Purpose</b>	To publicise the BCWA policy on complaints on the BCWA website.
<b>Related Policies and Procedures</b>	Please use this policy in conjunction with:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equality of opportunity policy</li><li>• Safeguarding Adults policy</li><li>• Safeguarding Children policy</li><li>• Protection from Abuse policy</li><li>• Employee handbook</li></ul>
<b>Policy review date</b>	April 2023

## PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Black Country Women's Aid aims to ensure that all women and children using our services receive the highest possible quality of service and that our services are shaped by the views of women and children. We want to encourage all our clients to give feedback about our services and we recognise their right to make a complaint, compliment or a suggestion about our services.

## AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

- Black Country Women's Aid aims to ensure that all employees, volunteers or anyone who comes in to contact with BCWA are treated with respect and have a good experience.
- We are committed to making sure that we use client feedback to help us continuously improve our services.
- We will also encourage feedback from clients on areas of local, regional and national policy, legislation and services to help us to develop a more effective and coordinated response to interpersonal violence.
- We work with a range of stakeholders and ongoing feedback is vital for the ongoing development and review of our services

We will:

- Inform individuals about the right to complain to the next stage when dissatisfied with our response
- Complaints are taken seriously and in a timely manner
- Treat all complaints confidentially and reassure individuals that they can make complaints without fear of reprisal, victimisation or being disadvantaged
- Record and analyse all complaints, so that learning from complaints informs service development and improvement
- Action to rectify the cause of the complaint is identified, implemented and evaluated
- Complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly, honestly and openly
- Set and monitor response targets for responding to feedback
- Contact the client, acknowledge their complaint and advise who is dealing with it
- Keep the client updated with the progress of their complaint
- Complaints handling complies with confidentiality and data protection policies and is transparent

## All individuals have the right to:

- Choose how they give us feedback about our services – online, in writing, phone, in person or any other method they prefer
- Expect us to use plain language when communicating and communicate in a way appropriate to their needs, e.g. literacy level, language, age.
- To be given a named contact officer, phone number, e-mail address and target date for a response
- Be kept informed when we cannot send a response in time
- Complain to the next stage when dissatisfied with our response

## WHISTLEBLOWING

Where a complaint is made that fits within the criteria of whistleblowing, the whistleblowing procedures should be followed, including legal protection for the whistleblower, immediate action and thorough investigation.

The person to whom the complaint is reported should discuss with the complainee that their complaint meets the criteria for whistleblowing. They should explain what this means, for example by walking them through the whistleblowing procedures. They should ensure that the complainee understands and consents for their complaint to be dealt with according to the whistleblowing procedures.

Please see the Whistleblowing Procedures for more.

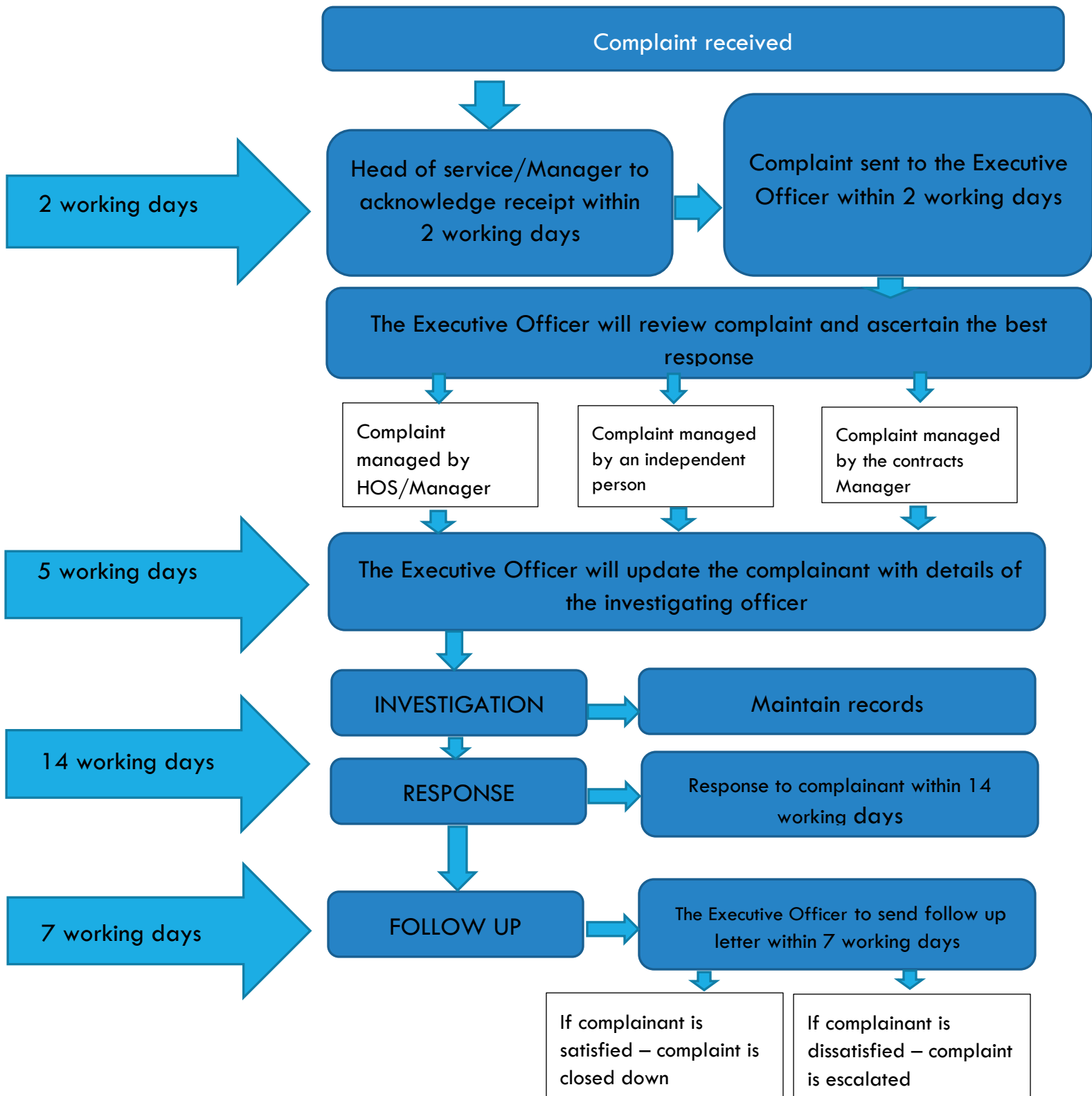
## SERVICE PROCEDURES

Complaints, comments and compliments can come through a range of sources and can depend on the type of clients supported (e.g. children) and contractual requirements of the service (e.g. reporting to contractor).

- Complaint forms are sent to the Executive Officer who will review and arrange for the appropriate manager to respond. Any complaints that are responded to by managers should be given to the Executive Officer for final audit and review.
- Where complaints come via Facebook, or corporate emails, they will be sent on to the Executive Officer who will arrange for a response to be made.
- The Executive Officer's oversight ensures that complaints and complaint responses are reviewed by an independent person.

All services ensure these procedures are embedded into their case management systems.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES



## STAGE 1 - INITIAL COMPLAINT

1. All incoming complaints will be directed to the Manager/Head of Service.
2. Heads/Managers send an acknowledgement of the complaint within 48 hours.
3. This should be done in writing and can be via letter or email. A copy of the letter should be provided to the Executive Officer.
4. All complaints received should be sent within 2 working days to the Executive Officer.

### Social Media Complaints

When a complaint is received via social media this should be notified to the Executive Officer with full details of the post. Where comments are posted publicly, a public acknowledgement should be made expressing our concern and asking the complainant to contact the Executive Officer, Tracey Alexander, so the complaint can be resolved. The form of words should be agreed by the Executive Officer and the Development and Communications Manager. A response **should not** be posted without agreement.

## STAGE 2 - INITIAL REVIEW

1. The Executive Officer will review the original complaint and ascertain the best way that this is dealt with, this could involve;
  - a. The complaint can be managed by the Manager/Head of Service
  - b. The complaint should be managed by an independent person
  - c. The complaint will be managed by the Executive Officer
2. The Executive Officer will write to the client to update on the process and advise the service user who the “managing officer” is for this complaint and provide a time scale for response (no more than 14 days).

## STAGE 3 - INVESTIGATION

1. The “managing officer” will need to review the complaint and will need to undertake an initial investigation.
2. Records should be kept of all correspondence, evidence gathered and associated investigations.
3. Investigations should be thorough to include all aspects of the complaint.

## STAGE 4 - OUTCOME

1. An update will be required to the complainee on the outcome within 14 days.
2. An update should be sent to the Executive Officer who will ensure the response has been completed.

3. The Executive Officer will send a complaint closure letter to the client and ensure they are satisfied with the response provided and providing details of escalation procedures if they are not happy.
4. The complaint should be added to the BCWA Complaint Log and stored with all records made.

## STAGE 5 - ESCALATION PROCEDURES

If at any point the service user is not happy with the response, then this should be passed to the Executive Officer.

1. An acknowledgement should be given within 48 hours.
2. A new investigation of the original complaint will be taken by a different “managing officer”.
3. Any new circumstances will be taken into consideration.
4. An outcome will be given to the service user.
5. If the service user is not happy, this will be escalated to the CEO and the complaint re-investigated as above.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Complaints can be made via;

### Telephone

0121 553 0090 (You can ask to speak with Tracey Alexander or the Manager of the service that you have a complaint regarding)

### Email

[tracey.alexander@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk](mailto:tracey.alexander@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk)

[info@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk](mailto:info@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk) (You can ask to speak with the Manager of the service that you have a complaint regarding)

### Post

Black Country Women’s Aid, 1st Floor Landchard House  
Victoria Street  
West Bromwich  
B70 8HY

VERSION CONTROL AND SIGN OFF

Version	Date Amended	What has changed	Policy updated by
V1	April 2022	Complaints policy extracted for BCWA Website.	Project Officer