

Glasgow Life: Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

Glasgow Life is committed to delivering quality services that are relevant to all of Glasgow's citizens and visitors alike. We want to improve our customers and users experience so that they can lead richer and more active lives.

2. Aim of the Policy

Glasgow Life wants to put customers and users at the very heart of the way we develop our services. Customers and users comments are part of our ongoing consultation process and we value this feedback, to learn lessons and help drive forward service improvements.

Comments are received from customers and users of our services in a variety of ways including Customer Comment Cards, letters, Glasgow Life website and social networking feedback.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- complaints are dealt with quickly, effectively and in a transparent way;
- responses are fair, proportionate and handled in a consistent manner; and
- it is user focused and accessible.

This document sets out how we manage and respond to comments, compliments and complaints.

3. What are comments, compliments and complaints?

Glasgow Life welcomes comments and suggestions for improvements to services as well as compliments our customers and users wish to make. A comment is normally a personal opinion or belief, feedback or remark expressed by customers and users. Likewise, positive recognition from customers and users for a job well done by individual employees or the way services are delivered is considered to be a compliment.

Complaints are a result of dissatisfaction with the service provided. For example a complaint may be about:

- an absence or unsatisfactory level of service;
- the failure or poor standard of a service;
- the conduct of employees providing a service;
- the failure of Glasgow Life employees to follow agreed policies and procedures.

An initial request for a service is not a complaint.

4. Handling comments, compliments and complaints

Wherever possible, Glasgow Life employees will deal with the majority of issues that customers and users raise, quickly and informally. Frontline staff will aim to resolve issues at the point of service delivery, and if necessary involve supervisory/managerial staff as appropriate.

If a comment is received at any venue regarding catering and hospitality, which is delivered by Encore Hospitality Services, Glasgow Life's Comment, Compliment and Complaints Policy will be applied.

If a complaint cannot be resolved 'on the spot', the following procedure will be followed:

Stage 1

The staff member will find out more about the points raised by the customer/user, and an acknowledgement will be issued within 5 working days, with a full response made within a further 10 working days. The response letter will advise the customer/user what they need to do to progress to stage 2 if they remain dissatisfied. Responses may be emailed if we have the customers and users email addresses. Frontline staff may also refer the complaint directly to Head Office if it is complex or of a more serious nature e.g. a vulnerable person, press interest, delay in providing a service. Where it relates to an incident or dangerous occurrence, (e.g. it involves Child Protection Act, Health and Safety at work etc.), the procedure for Child Protection and Incident & Dangerous Occurrence is followed. (see section 9 below).

Stage 2

If the customer/user is still unhappy and wishes to appeal, an investigation will take place, by a member of the Senior Management Team who should acknowledge the appeal letter within 5 working days. At this stage the customer/user will be provided with the name and contact details of the person investigating their complaint. The investigation will take account of what the customer/user expects to achieve by complaining and whether it is realistic and achievable. A response will be made in writing within 10 working days, either upholding the complaint or, where this is not the case, a full explanation will be given of the company's position, together with advice on what they need to do to progress to stage 3 if they remain dissatisfied. Responses may be emailed if we have the customer/user email address.

Stage 3

If the customer/user is still unhappy they should write to the Chief Executive to request further investigation or clarification, if they think that relevant information was not taken into account in investigating the complaint; that policy has not been properly applied in handling the complaint; or that there has been an incorrect interpretation of the company's policy. An acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days and a full reply by letter will be made within 10 working days containing details of the investigation/review of the case; the outcome of the review; and information about the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

If the complaint is complex or translation/interpretation is required and a full reply cannot be sent within the above timescales an interim reply will be sent reporting on progress and providing the date for a final reply.

Where a complaint investigation identifies that we have in some way failed to provide the service that we should have provided, appropriate actions will be determined in a fair and reasonable manner to help remedy the situation e.g. an apology, an explanation of what went wrong, measures to put things right, offer of financial redress, or why Glasgow Life is unable to assist. Where we agree to take measures to put things right we will include details of what will be done and when this will happen. We will also endeavour that the same thing does not happen to someone else. Any financial payments will take account of the degree to which the complainant has contributed to the failure or loss suffered and the time and trouble incurred by the complainant in pursuing the complaint.

Ordinarily, customers and users will have 20 working days from the date of the company's response to make a request for their complaint to progress to the next stage of the complaints procedure. They will be advised if different statutory timescales apply.

If a customer/user is unhappy about the way that Glasgow Life has dealt with their complaint they can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman who is independent and can investigate complaints about most Glasgow Life matters. This should be done within 12 months of the problem arising.

Customers and users can also contact their local Councillor, MP or MSP for help or support with their complaint at any stage. Names of elected representatives can be found by visiting Glasgow City Council's website www.glasgow.gov.uk or by phoning 0141 287 2000 (Council switchboard). The Ombudsman can be contacted at: 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS. Tel no: 0800 377 7330 or email: ask@spsso.org

If a complaint relates to a partner organisation the complaint will be forwarded to the relevant contact and the customer will be informed of the action.

5. Recording comments, compliments and complaints

All comments, compliments and complaints are recorded in our electronic Customer Comments System. The information recorded is sufficiently detailed to allow follow-up action to be taken to improve services and prevent a recurrence of any issues identified e.g. the customer/user details, the issues raised, date of action taken and outcome of the case. It also contains space for notes of any meetings and telephone calls, email correspondence with the customer/user and any internal communications with staff about the investigation.

Line managers are encouraged to advise staff concerned of the details of any comments or compliments received concerning them.

We will ensure that the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998 are adhered to in relation to retaining personal information and providing a fair and accessible procedure.

No personal details of any customer will be published by Glasgow Life, however improvements made as a result of customer comments will be displayed in venues.

6. Promoting equality of access

Glasgow Life is committed to ensuring that all people are given full and equal access to making comments, compliments or complaints. At stage one, we will accept complaints in the following way:

- by telephone or by face-to-face at service point of contact;
- by completing a simple Customers Comments Card (and posting it in the mailbox at reception), available in all Glasgow Life facilities; or downloading from www.glasgowlife.org.uk and returning to: Freepost GW8140, Glasgow Life, Glasgow G1 1ZZ;
- by writing to Business Support, Glasgow Life, 20 Trongate, Glasgow G1 5ES or by e-mail at info@glasgowlife.org.uk ;

- by telephoning Glasgow Life on 0141 287 0952 or by faxing 0141 287 0980; and
- by using the online Customer Comments form on the [Glasgow Life website](#)

Where complaints are received centrally via the Business Support Team, or for the attention of the Chief Executive, these will be cascaded to the appropriate service or officer for information or in most cases for a response to be sent out direct to the customer/user, in line with the corporate timescales, which states that all requests must be acknowledged within 5 working days and a full response made within a further 10 working days.

If customers and users are unsure about how to make a complaint or need any assistance, they should speak to a member of staff at the venue.

Alternatively, service areas should be contacted directly:

- Glasgow Sports 0141 287 4808
- Glasgow Events 0141 302 2845
- Glasgow Libraries 0141 287 2870
- Glasgow Communities 0141 287 2870
- Glasgow Museums 0141 276 9372
- Glasgow Arts 0141 287 5810
- Glasgow Music 0141 287 5810
- Young Glasgow 0141 276 0727

The Head Office may also be contacted for assistance, by telephone: 0141 287 0978, or by email: info@glasgowlife.org.uk.

Where customers and users cannot provide the complaint in writing, a member of staff will write the complaint for them and read it back to ensure that an accurate record of the complaint has been taken. Where possible, customers and users should endorse the letter to show that it has been agreed.

Glasgow Life will also make sure, where necessary, to:

- provide assistance to people who have difficulty with spoken English or whose first language is not English;
- provide support for visually impaired customers and users;
- arrange sign language interpretation when appropriate;
- make sure that the Customer Comments Card is available in other formats on request; and
- accept and respond to correspondence in alternative formats (e.g. large print, audiotape, computer disc, community languages and in Braille).

Where a customer/user is unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint on their own we will accept complaints brought by third parties as long as they obtain appropriate consent from the customer/user.

Customers and users will be requested to provide equality monitoring information to help Glasgow Life make sure that all groups of people access and use the complaints procedure, and are treated fairly. This, however, is voluntary and customers and users do not need to provide this.

7. Evaluation and Monitoring

Glasgow Life's Performance and Service Quality Team will provide the Senior Management Team with regular reports from the electronic Customer Comments System. The reports will analyse all feedback including comments, compliments and complaints and will highlight areas of good practice and areas where improvement actions are required

A random sample of complainants will be contacted after a complaint has been dealt with to complete a satisfaction form. The aim of this form is to provide information to help Glasgow Life determine whether the complaint procedure was accessible and easy to use, and assess the levels of satisfaction with the way the complaint was handled and with the action taken.

Details of service improvements made as a result of feedback from customers and users will be gathered by the Business Support Team and will be incorporated within the company's annual performance report.

The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects best practice, or when statutory requirements change to ensure its ongoing relevance.

8. Unreasonably persistent or demanding complainants

As with other aspects of this policy Glasgow Life follows guidance issued by the Ombudsman, including guidance issued relating to unreasonable or demanding behaviour.

Glasgow Life wants to ensure that complainants who are unreasonably persistent or demanding are dealt with fairly, honestly and properly; that the resources of the company are used as effectively as possible; and that other customers and users or employees of Glasgow Life do not suffer any detriment as a result of their behaviour.

Persistent behaviour may be someone continually complaining in person or through repeated letters of complaint or phone calls about the same issue. Demanding behaviour may be someone expecting a response within unreasonable time-scales; insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff; or repeatedly changing the substance of the complaint, or raising unrelated concerns.

Where we decide that someone is unreasonably persistent or demanding the action we take will be appropriate and proportionate. This may mean we apply restrictions such as communicating via letters only or restricting telephone calls to specified times, with a named officer. We will aim to do this in a way, wherever possible, that allows a complaint to progress to completion through our complaints process. The Senior Management Team shall make the decision as to when communication is restricted with regards to persistent and demanding complainants.

If a decision is taken to apply restrictions, the Senior Management Team will write to tell the complainant why we believe his or her behaviour is considered to be unreasonably persistent or demanding, what action we are taking and the duration of that action. We will also tell the complainant what they can do to have the decision reviewed. A decision to restrict complainant contact may be reconsidered if the complainant demonstrates a more acceptable approach.

Glasgow Life acknowledges that some complaints may be difficult to resolve and can cause anxiety and distress to complainants, and employees. Whilst Glasgow Life will always aim to try to find a way to resolve matters, there may be circumstances where a complainant persists in pursuing a complaint when the complaints procedure has been properly and fully implemented.

In such cases a review of the complainant's case will be carried out to ensure that it does not contain new issues which merit a response, and we will advise them accordingly. This may result in informing the complainant that no further action can be taken if there are no new or substantive issues. Any further correspondence will be read and filed, but only acknowledged or responded to if the complainant provides significant new information relating to the complaint.

We record all incidents of unacceptable actions by complainants. Where it is decided to restrict complainant contact, an entry noting this will be made in the relevant file in the Customer Comments System.

9. Issues that fall outside of this policy

Certain types of complaint are not dealt with by the complaints policy. Complaints by Glasgow Life employees - unless they are made as customers and users - are more appropriate to be dealt with under the company's Human Resources policies and procedures.

The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards Glasgow Life staff is likely to result in the ending of all direct contact with the complainant. The Health and Safety Executive's definition of work related violence is: "any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work." Incidents may be reported to the police. Employees have the right to perform their duties without fear of abuse, injury, violent behaviour or threats. Glasgow Life's Prevention of Work Related Violence Policy identifies the roles and responsibilities for dealing with the issue of work related violence.

Glasgow Life will involve the police in cases where it is believed that a complainant has committed a criminal offence (for example, assault of an employee or criminal damage), where assault is threatened or where a complainant refuses to leave Glasgow Life premises.

Glasgow Life staff will end telephone calls if the caller is considered aggressive, abusive or offensive. The staff member taking the call has the right to make this decision, tell the caller that the behaviour is unacceptable and end the call if the behaviour does not stop.

Likewise, we do not deal with correspondence (letter, fax or email) that is abusive to staff or contains allegations that lack substantive evidence. When this happens we will tell the complainant that we consider their language offensive, unnecessary and unhelpful. We will ask them to stop using such language and state that we will not respond.

Incidents that relate to child protection issues will be dealt with through the company's record and refer processes as set out in the company's Child Protection Policy.

Hate crime incidents that are not related to Glasgow Life services or the conduct of Glasgow Life employees should be reported via a third party reporting centre or the Strathclyde Police online reporting form. A hate crime incident is any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by prejudice against someone's sex, racial heritage, religion, disability or sexual orientation. A list of these agencies, as well as an electronic remote reporting form, is accessible on the [Strathclyde Police website](#).

Further information, together with leaflets in community languages is available on: <http://www.saferglasgow.com/corporate-info/hate-crime> or by phoning the Hate Crime Officer on 0141 276 7471.

10. Staff Training

All staff who potentially have a role in implementing this policy will be provided with suitable training so that they understand their role and responsibilities. This will include frontline staff that may be approached by customers and users wishing to complain and staff with a responsibility for investigating complaints.

The policy will be published to all our staff and built into induction and customer service training with the aim of empowering staff to resolve complaints, where it is possible and practical for staff to do so, starting with the first point of contact with customers and users.

Staff with responsibility for investigating complaints will have a thorough understanding of the complaints procedure and a reasonable knowledge of the procedures of the service or function under investigation. They will be fully trained in how to plan and conduct investigations, including how to obtain and analyse evidence.

Managers will have a responsibility to inform, support and monitor staff to ensure that the policy and procedure is properly implemented and that all staff are aware of the main stages of the complaints procedure and the person responsible for coordinating complaints within their service area.

Staff handling the complaint will have access to information on Data Protection and Freedom of Information law and practice and will be aware of the expectations of the public in respect of their information.

11. Publicising the policy

We will publicise the comments, compliments and complaints policy using comments cards, posters, and the company's website. There will be one standard Glasgow Life comments card and poster for use by all Glasgow Life services. These will be prominently displayed in all cultural and sporting venues. All publicity material will be presented in plain English and available, on request, in alternative formats including large print, community languages, and Braille.