

Tell Us Policy

(Compliments and complaints)

What is this policy about?

The Tell Us Policy is our way of explaining how people can give complaints and compliments to PSS and how we will respond to it. An easy read version of this policy is also available.

Who is this for?

I am a...	I need to read this policy
Person supported by PSS	✓
Member of staff	✓
Trustee	✓
Shared Lives carer	✓
Volunteer	✓
Student	✓
Person doing work on PSS's behalf (eg agency worker, associate, partner)	✓

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COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

What is a compliment?

A compliment is when someone has something nice to say about the support provided by PSS or about PSS team members.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is when someone tells us that they are unhappy with something and want something to be done about it.

When someone gives a compliment or makes a complaint they're giving us feedback.

How to give feedback

At PSS, we call the feedback process 'Tell Us'. We encourage people to tell us what they think about the support they, or someone they support or care for, get from PSS.

You can 'Tell Us' in the following ways:

- Talking to a PSS team member
- Writing to us:
PSS Tell Us,
Eleanor Rathbone House,
Connect Business Village,
Unit 16,
24 Derby Road,
Liverpool,
L5 9PR
- Emailing us: tellus@pss.org.uk
- Calling us: 0151 702 5555

- Texting us: 07599656850
- There is also a link on our website where you can submit feedback here:
<https://psspeople.com/contact-us/tell-us-what-you-think/>
- You can arrange to come into your nearest office and speak with a PSS team member.

Who can give feedback through our Tell Us process?

- People supported by PSS
- Parents, carers and guardians
- Members of the public
- Shared Lives carers
- Volunteers
- Professionals we work with eg social workers, health workers and others
- Legal guardians of someone supported by PSS
- Advocates
- Members of Parliament (MPs) or other elected officials, like local councillors

Anyone who works with PSS, such as teammates, students or anyone working on behalf of PSS, will have a different process. They can speak to their line manager, head of service, our people and culture team or the PSS head of quality for support with any concerns or complaints about workplace-related matters. They can also look at the policies below for support and guidance:

- Safeguarding Adults and Children (for issues relating to abuse)
- Raising a concern policy (whistleblowing)
- Belonging policy (for matters relating to oppression and equality, inclusion and diversity)

Why are compliments important to PSS?

Compliments are important because they let us know what we're doing well and what we should continue doing. They give us opportunities to learn and share that feedback with our teammates and Shared Lives carers. This helps boost morale and lets people know that they're having a positive impact on someone's support, and that their support is appreciated.

Why are complaints important to PSS?

Complaints are important because they help us understand people's feelings and experiences. They help us keep supported people, Shared Lives carers and PSS team members safe. We can use complaints to learn and improve how we support people. Our support is person-centred, so we really value opportunities to make sure we're getting that right. Without feedback like complaints, we don't know what needs to change or how.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESSES

What will PSS do with my complaint?

We will listen and record all the information you give us. This is so we have all the information needed to make sure your complaint is being dealt with by the right PSS team member. We'll discuss your complaint in a way that works best for you, eg, over the phone, online, letter or in a face-to-face meeting. Please let us know if you need information in a different or more accessible format such as in your preferred language or in easy read.

Once we understand your complaint, we'll look into it and keep you updated with what will happen next. We'll also give you a timescale of when we'll get back to you with an update.

We really value all feedback, so any feedback we receive, whether that be a complaint or a compliment, is recorded on our secure client management system (CMS). We expect PSS team members to record feedback on this system within 24 hours of receiving it.

What happens after I've made my complaint?

A PSS team member should be in touch with you within five working days to let you know we have received your complaint. We'll work with you to better understand your complaint more, provide further information if anything needs clarifying, and talk about what you would like to change if your complaint relates to something we're able to change, do differently or learn from. We'll try to resolve things as soon as possible, but if we can't put things right straight away, an investigation might need to take place. You'll be told which PSS team member will investigate your complaint if this is needed. Investigations can take up to 12 weeks so that we have the time and resources to make sure everything is explored thoroughly and professionally.

Once we've finished the investigation, a PSS team member will contact you in the way you've told us works best for you, to share the outcomes of the investigation.

What if I am unhappy with the outcome of my complaint?

If you're unhappy with our complaint response, you need to let us know you want to make an appeal within 15 working days of the complaint outcome being communicated with you. You should hear back from a PSS team member within five working days of contacting us to confirm we have received your appeal. A more senior PSS team member will consider if there are grounds to your appeal, and if there are, your complaint will be looked into with fresh eyes. We will again try to resolve this as soon as possible, but it might take up to 12 weeks from receiving your appeal if further investigation is needed.

Are all complaint appeals accepted?

No. Appeals are looked at on an individual basis. Appeals will only be considered if you're able to tell us there was something factually wrong, if something wasn't covered in the first complaint outcome, or if you feel there was unfairness, bias, or there wasn't enough done to put things right. It's important that when you appeal, you tell us what you feel was wrong and disagree with. The decision about whether or not we accept an appeal will always be explained.

What if I'm still unhappy after I've made an appeal?

If you're still unhappy after PSS has looked at your complaint again in the appeal process, we'll tell you about some people or other organisations who can independently look into this with you or give you advice.

These could include:

- The commissioner of a PSS service
- Local ombudsman
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Specialist advocacy services
- Law Centre
- Private solicitor
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)
- Charity Commission
- Shared Lives Plus

How to get in touch

Local authorities

Check out your local authority's website for their complaints contact details.

Local ombudsman:

Website: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/how-to-complain> Phone line: 0300 061 0614 Advice for complaining by post: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/complain-to-us-by-post>

Citizen's Advice Bureau:

Website: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
Phone number: 0808 223 1133

Specialist advocacy services:

Specialist advocacy services help people to understand their rights, express their views, be involved in decision making, as well as making complaints.

Here are some specialist advocacy services in your local area:

Liverpool/Merseyside:

N-compass

Website link: <https://www.n-compass.org.uk/get-support/advocacy/liverpool-advocacy-hub/>

Phone number: 03450138208

North Yorkshire:

Cloverleaf Advocacy:

Online referral forms: [Cloverleaf Advocacy online referral forms](#)

Email: referrals@cloverleaf-advocacy.co.uk

Phone: [01609 765355](tel:01609765355)

Website: [Cloverleaf Advocacy website](#)

Manchester:

Voiceability:

Website: <https://www.voiceability.org/>

Email: helpline@voiceability.org

Phone: 03003031660

Norfolk:

Norfolk advocacy partnership:

Website: <https://www.norfolkadvocacy.org.uk/>

Email: info@norfolkadvocacy.org.uk

Phone: 01508 491210

Suffolk:

Suffolk Advocacy Service:

Website: <https://www.pohwer.net/suffolk-advocacy-service>

Email: SuffolkAdvocacyService@pohwer.net

Phone: 0300 456 2370

Midlands:

Asist advocacy services:

Website: <https://asist.co.uk/>

Email: enquiries@asist.co.uk

Phone: <tel:03008001000>

Lincolnshire:

Voiceability:

Website: <https://www.voiceability.org/support-and-help/services-by-location/lincolnshire>

Email: helpline@voiceability.org

Phone: <tel:+443003031660>

Wales:

Advocacy Support Cymru:

Website: <https://ascymru.org.uk/>

Phone: <tel:02920540444>

Email: info@ascymru.org.uk

Cheshire:

Website: <https://www.voiceability.org/support-and-help/services-by-location/cheshire-east>

Email: helpline@voiceability.org

Phone: <tel:+443003031660>

Law center:

Find a local law center online: <https://www.lawcentres.org.uk/get-help>

Care Quality Commission (CQC):

Website: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/>

Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

Phone: <tel:03000616161>

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW):

Website: <https://www.careinspectorate.wales/>

Email: CIW@gov.wales

Phone: 0300 7900 126

Charity Commission:

Website: <https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/>

Phone: 0300 066 9197

Shared Lives Plus

Shared Lives Plus are here to help Shared Lives carers. They can offer legal and practical advice and support to Shared Lives carers if you're a member.

Website: <https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/>

Phone: 01512273499

Email address: info@sharedlivesplus.org.uk

Complaint steps**Complaint steps: what happens next?**

A simple guide to how PSS listens, responds and learns from complaints.

1. Tell us about your complaint

You can speak to a PSS team member, write to us, email, phone us, text us, use the website form, or arrange to speak to someone in person.

**2. We listen and record what you tell us**

We'll check we understand your complaint and agree the best way to keep in touch with you.

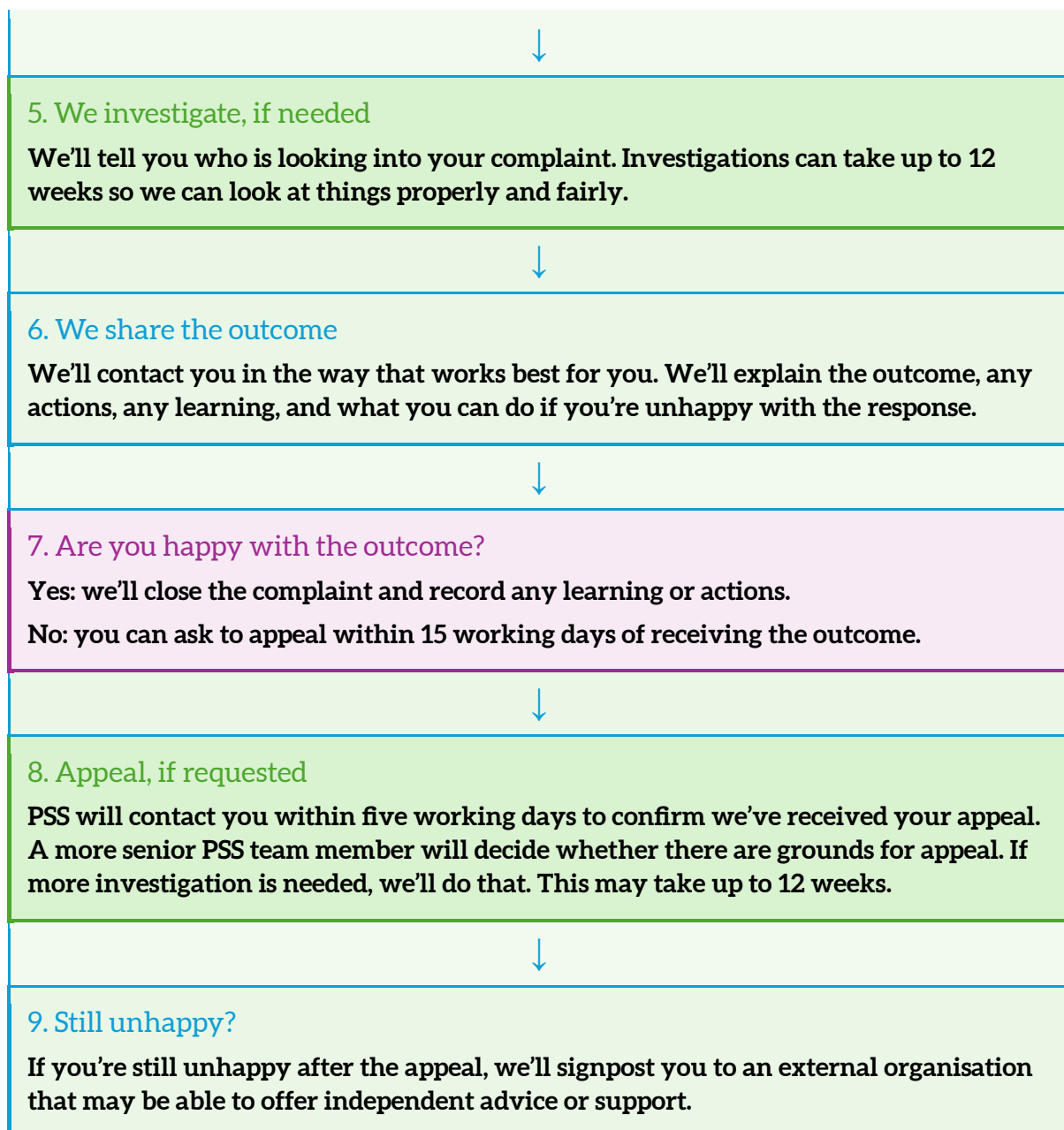
**3. We confirm we have received it**

A PSS team member should contact you within five working days to confirm we've received your complaint and explain what will happen next.

**4. Can we put things right quickly?**

If we can resolve things quickly, we'll do this and let you know the outcome.

If we need more information, we may need to investigate.



GUIDANCE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT

What if I'm worried about making a complaint?

We understand that making a complaint can be scary, or that you might be worried your support will be affected. We want to reassure you that your complaint will be dealt with professionally and won't negatively affect your support. If you're worried that your support has changed because of a complaint, you can ask to speak to the head of service for the service you get support from, or you can speak to the PSS head of quality (Simone McCaskill)

or our director of operations (Harriet Michael-Phillips). You can also speak to one of the outside organisations listed earlier if you're worried.

Can I complain anonymously?

Anonymously means you can tell us something without giving us any personal or identifying details that tell us who you are.

You can complain anonymously. However, this will make investigating your complaint more difficult and sometimes we might not be able to do this without personal details. It will also mean we are unable to give you any specific details about the complaint and its outcome.

What support can I get to make a complaint?

- Access to interpreter services can be arranged if English isn't your preferred language.
- Reasonable adjustments can be made if you have accessibility needs, for example, making sure a meeting can take place at an accessible venue if a wheelchair user would like to complain in person.
- You can have someone help you make a complaint such as a PSS team member or friend; but we would need your consent to speak to this person or give them any identifiable information.
- You can have a representative or advocate complain on your behalf, but we would need your consent to discuss any specifics or personal details with them.

If you don't have capacity to consent, the person speaking on your behalf would be the legal guardian or someone who is working in your best interest and is external to PSS.

What is capacity?

Capacity means you can:

- Make a decision
- Remember your decision
- Understand the decision you are making
- Think about the decision
- Let someone know about your decision

If a person can't do these things in relation to a particular decision, the person lacks the capacity to make that decision. This is explained by the Mental Capacity Act 2005. If a person lacks capacity, someone else will need to help make a best interest decision on their behalf.

How is capacity decided?

Capacity is time and decision specific. To know if someone has capacity or not, a mental capacity assessment will need to be carried out for that specific decision.

Can someone complain on my behalf?

Yes, they can, as long as you say that they can. This could be a parent, friend, family member, carer or other professional or advocate.

A complaint can also be made on someone else's behalf if the person has died and you are their next of kin or executor to their will.

In some circumstances, someone with Lasting Power of Attorney can also complain on someone's behalf.

You can also complain on someone's behalf if they are too physically unwell that they can't complain themselves.

When someone makes a complaint on your behalf, we call this person a **representative**.

What if my complaint is about discrimination or oppression I have experienced or witnessed?

Discrimination is when someone is treated differently because of a protected characteristic. Oppression relates to power/acts/behaviors that reinforce discriminatory behaviors.

UK law defines nine categories of protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or religious belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

If you have experienced or witnessed discrimination or oppression whilst getting support from PSS, or through interactions with PSS, we want you to please report this through Tell Us. If you're reporting on someone else's behalf, please make sure they are happy for you to do this. You can refer to our PSS Belonging Policy for more information about how PSS responds to discrimination or oppression and how we want to prevent this as an organisation.

Why is reporting and raising complaints around discrimination important to PSS?

It's important to us that everyone feels they belong at PSS. By reporting discrimination and oppression, we are able to tackle this and make sure everyone feels safe.

Our PSS Belonging Policy gives more information about what belonging means to us at PSS and what we have in place to make sure everyone has a positive experience.

Without people reporting and raising when and if they witness discrimination, we can't know where we need to improve or where things need to change.

USEFUL DEFINITIONS:

Acknowledgement: informing people that their complainant has been received, and someone is looking into it.

Advocate: a trusted person who helps you get your views and opinions across.

Anonymously: a way to complain without anyone knowing who you are.

Appeals process – the process where people disagree with the outcome or decision made by PSS and it's looked at again.

Capacity: whether someone can or cannot make decisions on their own or whether they need help with this.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) - is the independent inspector for adult and child social services in Wales.

Care package – is a package of care decided by social workers and local councils. For example, how many hours someone is granted to have a personal assistant.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) - an independent inspector of health and social care services in England. It is like Ofsted for health and social care.

Charity Commission – is the independent government agency that regulates charities in England and Wales.

Citizen's Advice Bureau: a charity that helps people by giving them free and independent advice, support and guidance.

Client Management System (CMS) - is a computer system PSS uses to securely share and log important and private information about supported people, team members, Shared Lives carers and carers, parents and guardians of supported people.

Commissioner: someone who works at the council and makes decisions about how and where money is spent.

Communication: how we get information to each other and how we interact.

Complaint: a complaint is when someone tells us they are unhappy with what they have experienced at PSS.

Complaints appeal manager – the person in charge of looking at and investigating the appeal.

Complaints manager: the person in charge of investigating and managing the complaint.

Compliment: when someone tells us something nice about PSS and our services.

Concern – this is something that could be a risk, or wrong doing which we'd want to know about at PSS. PSS has a 'Raising a Concern' (Whistle blowing) policy that may need to be followed or helpful when there are concerns.

Co-production – is when supported people and PSS team members work together to design and deliver parts of the services. This is also known as 'working together' at PSS.

Correspondence – any communication between people. For example, letters or emails.

Data breach – is when personal data has been lost or shared incorrectly or stolen or corrupted. This is something PSS would want to know about so this can be managed.

Data protection – is how organisations protect personal data from being lost, stolen or corrupted. Keeping it safe and secure so that confidential information stays that way. Lots of the ways to do this and what organisations are required to do is set out in the GDPR law and Data Protection Act.

Discrimination - is when someone is treated differently based on the nine protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Elected officials – people chosen by the public to represent them in government.

Feedback- is when people give us their opinions and thoughts on PSS. This can be a compliment, concern, or a complaint.

Health and safety – regulations and rules in order to avoid people getting injured or hurt.

Interpreter – someone who can translate something from one language to another language. For example, a Spanish interpreter would sit in and repeat everything that is being said in English, so someone whose primary language is Spanish can understand what is being said. It could also involve someone translating in sign language.

Investigation – looking into any information and speaking to anyone involved. To look for evidence or any relevant information needed to make a decision.

Law Centre - is a charity that provides free legal advice and representation to people who need it.

Legal guardians – someone who has legal authority to make decisions around someone's care.

Local authority: your local council

Local council : the same thing as a local authority, it's just another name for it.

Local ombudsman: an impartial, free and independent service that investigates complaints about your local council and adult social care providers.

Mental Capacity Act: a piece of law that explains what capacity is and how you assess someone to have or not have capacity around making decisions and who can do this in someone's best interests if a person does not have capacity.

Mental capacity assessment: an assessment which is used to understand if someone does or doesn't have capacity to make their own decisions.

Miscommunication: when something is not communicated well and there is a misunderstanding or confusion as a result.

MP: stands for Members of Parliament. This is someone who has been elected (voted for) to go to parliament and represent their local area.

Notified: being made aware of something.

Personal data: personal data is any identifiable information. Such as your name, age, address, bank details, etc.

Policy: is a guideline that people at PSS and those working at PSS have to follow and use to make decisions.

Power of attorney: when someone is legally chosen to make decisions on someone else's behalf because they don't have capacity to make decisions themselves.

Private solicitor: a lawyer who gives legal advice and services, working with individual clients rather than working for the government or organisations.

Professional: a way of acting that shows you care and are responsible.

Protected characteristics: a personal characteristic that is defined by law in the Equality Act (2010). The Equality Act has nine categories of protected characteristics. These are:

- Age
- Sex
- Gender Reassignment
- Religion or religious beliefs
- Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage or civil partnership

Quality checking: when someone who is or has been supported by PSS, or a Shared Lives carer, talks to others to get feedback about PSS's services, what we do well and what needs to get better.

Reasonable adjustments: things that can be changed to help disabled people get involved with and access things. An example of a reasonable adjustment would be giving someone with ADHD or autism a fidget toy to use, to help them concentrate.

Representative – someone who is representing or acting to put someone's views and opinions across.

Reputation – the beliefs and or opinions that are generally held about an organisation.

Reputational damage: making people think negatively about the organisation.

Resolution: an agreed action which marks the end of something.

Response: what PSS has decided has been proven or hasn't and any actions or outcomes that are being taken as a result.

Safeguarding: protecting people including children and vulnerable adults from preventable harm and abuse.

Sincere: being genuine and really meaning what you are saying.

Specialist advocacy services: people who understand and provide specific support and advice to people who have disabilities, mental health conditions and other difficulties or their families. They can help people get their thoughts and opinions heard.

Team member: anyone who is paid to work at PSS. This does not include Shared Lives carers.

Trauma: a deeply upsetting or distressing experience.

Trustee: someone who sits on the board of trustees and helps make important decisions about how a charity is run and makes sure it is doing the right thing.

Whistleblowing: where a current or previous employee reports wrongdoing that has occurred within the organisation to the organisation. For example, they believe a fellow colleague is stealing or committing fraud.