Complaints Policy

Introduction

We aim to maintain high standards in all that we do but recognise that we can sometimes get things wrong, despite our best intentions.

Better Lives Partnership (BLP) views a complaint as an opportunity, as well as a chance, to put things right for the person making the complaint, and to improve our services to young people. We would not be able to do so or learn for the future if we did not receive feedback when things go wrong. Therefore, we value and take seriously any feedback we receive.

Generally, the purpose of this Complaints Procedure is to resolve disputes informally without resorting to formal investigation or legal proceedings. We will try to explore every reasonable option to resolve complaints by working with the person making the complaint to agree an outcome which is satisfactory to them and BLP.

Whether your complaint is justified or not, our reply to you will describe the action we have taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions we have reached as a result of the investigation, and any action we have taken or are taking as a result of your complaint.

We will ensure that all information received and produced in connection with a complaint is treated as confidential and handled sensitively, that only those who need to know have access to that information, and that all relevant data protection requirements are met.

The information below sets out our Complaints Procedure.

Please note that BLP will not respond to anonymous complaints under this policy.

Complaint

A 'complaint' in this Procedure means any expression of dissatisfaction in relation to Better Lives Partnership that requires a response from Better Lives Partnership.

Where complaints may come from

Complaints may come from users of Better Lives Partnership's services, their families or those involved in BLP's activities such as donors, fundraisers, supporters or any other person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in BLP.

Complaints which cannot be dealt with under this Procedure

This Procedure is only for the above type of external complaint, not for complaints or grievances from staff, volunteers, trustees or others.

Complainants are generally entitled to receive responses to a complaint and to challenge any responses received from Better Lives Partnership. Better Lives Partnership will not deal with

complaints or challenges where in the reasonable opinion of the Chief Executive Officer they amount to persistent, habitual or vexatious complaints or challenges.

Better Lives Partnership expects any complainant to be polite and courteous. It will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour or demands.

How to make a complaint

First Stage

If you have a complaint, you can contact us in person or by phone, email, or letter.

To help us investigate and address all complaints, we ask you to provide us with as much information as possible. This should cover:

- The reason for or nature of your complaint
- Where and when what you are complaining about happened
- The name(s) of anyone involved (if known)
- What outcome you are hoping for (but we are not obliged to resolve the complaint in that way)
- Your contact details (name, address, daytime telephone number and/or email address)

Who you should contact within BLP will depend on how you decide to make contact, and on who you wish to make a complaint about. We have indicated below who you can contact:

Verbal complaints

You can make a complaint by telephone or by speaking to us in person in any of the following ways, during office hours.

If your complaint is about any member of staff, volunteer or Trustee, you can phone us on 01556 503888 and ask to speak to our Operations Director or Head of Business Support. They will either speak to you about the complaint or, if they are not the appropriate person to do so, they will arrange for the appropriate person to speak to you on the phone. Alternatively, you can speak or arrange to speak in person to the appropriate person about your complaint.

If you do not feel that you can approach any of the above verbally for any reason, you can instead write to us.

Complaints in writing

If you would prefer to write to us, please send your complaint to us:

Either by letter addressed as follows:

The Operations Director
Better Lives Partnership
Castle Douglas Community Centre
Castle Douglas
DG7 1AJ

or by email to: amcewan@betterlivespartnership.org.uk

Once the relevant person has initially received your complaint, it will be dealt with it as follows:

Table 1 – Delegated Authority

Who the complaint is about	Who will investigate, deal with, and respond to you about it.
Any member of Support staff	The Service Lead or line manager
Service Lead	Operations Director
Operations Director/Senior Manager	Chief Executive Officer
Chief Executive or a Trustee	Chair of Trustees
Chair of Trustees	Vice Chair of Trustees

Timescales for all First Stage complaints made by phone, in person or in writing.

We will try to resolve the problem as quickly as possible but if we cannot do this (for example, if we need to investigate further), we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within the following timescale:

- By phone or in person, either immediately or on the same day if you phone us or contact us in person
- By email, within 1 working day if you contact us by email
- By letter, within 5 working days if you contact us by letter

Our acknowledgement will inform you of when we will next contact you either with a proposed resolution or update. It will also inform you of the name of the person dealing with your complaint. That person will then investigate and deal with it and then respond to you with their definitive reply.

You should receive that definitive reply within 4 weeks of receipt of your complaint. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Second Stage - Appeal

If, for any reason, you are not happy with the resolution of your complaint under the First Stage Procedure outlined above, you can bring this to our attention as follows.

Please address a letter to:

The Chief Executive Officer
Better Lives Partnership
Castle Douglas Community Centre
Castle Douglas
DG7 1AJ

Alternatively, please email the Chief Executive Officer at rwalters@betterlivespartnership.org.uk

Please set out clearly the details of the complaint, explaining why you were not satisfied with our response under the First Stage and what you would like us to do to put things right. The Chief Executive Officer will then either investigate further or delegate the Appeal to the appropriate line manager illustrated in Table 1 – Delegated Authority.

The Chief Executive Officer will send an acknowledgment within 5 working days and arrange for the delegated line manager hearing your Appeal to investigate further and respond with a definitive reply within a further 10 working days.

Third Stage

If you are still not satisfied with our response and wish to take your complaint further, please inform the Chief Executive Officer within 28 days of receiving the definitive reply we sent to you under the Second Stage. Please contact him by letter or email as required for the Second Stage (as above).

Your case will then be passed to a panel of at least two Trustees (not including any Trustee about whom the complaint was made or the Trustee who investigated and responded to you under the Second Stage if this was the case). The panel will further investigate your complaint and will contact you with their conclusions and any actions to be taken.

You can expect this to take a further 10 working days from the date on which we receive your letter or email request to implement the Third Stage.

Follow up

In order for us to make improvements to BLP and our services we may wish to contact you within a month of your complaint being dealt with in order to check that you were satisfied with our resolution. Any information you give will only be used to make improvements to BLP and our services.

Taking your complaint outside Better Lives Partnership

The Scottish Fundraising Adjudications Panel

If your complaint is about our fundraising work or activities and you are not satisfied with our response, you are entitled to take it to The Scottish Fundraising Adjudications Panel. This is the self-regulatory scheme that works to ensure that organisations raising money from the public do so honestly and properly. As a member of The Scottish Fundraising Adjudications Panel we are committed to abiding by any decision they reach on complaints that are escalated to them. Their contact details are:

Email: info@goodfundraising.scot

Telephone: 0808 164 2520

9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

By Post: Scottish Fundraising Adjudication Panel, c/o The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), 2nd Floor, Quadrant House, 9 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY

The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

If your complaint is about any aspect of our charitable work other than our fundraising work or activities, you may wish to contact the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). However, we suggest that, before you do so, you consider whether it is appropriate to contact OSCR in the first instance rather than ourselves. OSCR has guidance on its website as to when to direct complaints to a charity and not to the regulator.

The OSCR contact form is the best way to get in touch for most general enquiries. If, however you need to contact them by post, email or telephone, you can do so at:

The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)
2nd Floor
Quadrant House
9 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY
info@oscr.org.uk
Tel: 01382 220446

Their phone lines are open 09:30 to 15:30 Monday to Thursday and 09:30 to 15:00 on a Friday, except for bank holidays. Please note: they are closed for lunch between 12:30 and 13:30.

For more information about OSCR's complaint handling performance, or to raise a complaint about OSCR's service, please see their complaints page on their website.

If a complaint relates to your personal data, you should contact Better Lives Partnership's Head of Business Support who is the organisation's Data Protection Officer. Alternatively, it may be appropriate to contact the Office of the Information Commissioner.

The information below outlines the various ways you can get in contact with the Scottish Information Commissioner.

Email: enquiries@foi.scot
Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
Fife
KY16 9DS
Tel: 01334 464610

Owner	**All Staff**
Author	**Robert D Walters FCMI, FIoL**
Date	**April 2025**
Version Number	**2**
Approved by	**The Board of Trustees**
Date of Review	**June 2026**
Date of Update	**June 2026 – change to job title for Service Lead**
Date of Review	**June 2027**