

# The Village Minibus Complaints Procedure

## INTRODUCTION

We seek to offer a high quality service to all users. We understand that there will be times when people who use our services wish to make suggestions to help us to improve these services, or to complain about the service they have received or feel they should be receiving.

We wish to ensure that everyone who uses our services is aware that they have the right to raise concerns or make complaints.

This leaflet explains how our Complaints Procedure works, what options are open to you if you have a complaint, and then how to go about making one. It also explains what action we will take if we receive a complaint from a user of our services or from someone acting on the user's behalf. This will ensure that you are able to take up your right to make a complaint, knowing that we will respond to it according to the procedures now established.

The Complaints Procedure aims to:

1. Address complaints thoroughly and sensitively.
2. Enable people to resolve matters at any stage of the procedure.
3. Encourage positive action by us in looking at the effect of the resolution(s) of a complaint on the provision of our service(s) and to implement changes as appropriate.

## WHO CAN COMPLAIN?

1. Any person using, or wishing to use, one of our services.
2. A person who legitimately represents someone who uses, or wishes to use, one of our services.

## WHAT CAN BE COMPLAINED ABOUT?

The Complaints Procedure can be used to raise any concerns about the service(s) you are receiving or feel you should be receiving.

## CAN I GET HELP IN MAKING MY COMPLAINT KNOWN?

The person dealing with your complaint will try to assist you in whichever way is appropriate: e.g. in putting your complaint in writing. If you wish to make a complaint verbally, you can bring someone along, either for support or to act on your behalf.

## TO WHOM DO I MAKE MY COMPLAINT?

In the first instance you should normally make a complaint, verbally or in writing, directly to the member of staff providing the relevant service. Or you may, if you prefer, make a complaint, in writing, to the Project Co-ordinator or the Chairperson of the Management Committee. However, in the latter case, the Chairperson of the Management Committee would normally refer the matter to the Project Co-ordinator, unless your complaint refers directly to the Project Co-ordinator.

## HOW DOES THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE WORK?

We intend to deal as quickly as possible with any complaint. For example, a verbal complaint should be dealt with as soon as it is received. You can expect a written

complaint to be acknowledged within three working days of it being received.

A written complaint will be investigated and responded to within 28 days: you will receive a reply in writing which will state the outcome.

These timescales are maximum limits: we would expect that most complaints would be dealt with well within these guidelines.

At each stage of the Complaints Procedure you have a right to appeal to a higher authority if you are not happy with the response to your complaint.

## **MAKING A COMPLAINT**

A complaint initially directed to the member of staff providing the relevant service will start at Stage 1. A complaint initially directed to the Project Co-ordinator or the Chairperson of the Management Committee will start at Stage 2.

### **STAGE 1**

a) Verbal complaint to the member of staff providing the relevant service.

The complaint is logged and discussed. If it is resolved to your satisfaction, this fact is logged: no further details are recorded. If it is unresolved, you should, within 14 days, put the complaint in writing and send it to the Project Co-ordinator: Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure is then invoked.

*OR*

b) Written complaint to the member of staff providing the relevant service.

The written complaint is logged and acknowledged within 3 working days of being received. The complaint is investigated and responded to within 28 days: you will receive a response in writing. If you are not satisfied with the response, you may appeal to the Project Co-ordinator within 14 days of receiving the written reply: Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure is then invoked.

### **STAGE 2**

The written complaint is logged and acknowledged within 3 working days of being received. The complaint is investigated and responded to within 28 days: you will receive a response in writing. If you are not satisfied with the response, you may appeal to the Chairperson of the Management Committee within 14 days of receiving the written reply: Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure is then invoked.

### **STAGE 3**

The Management Committee will meet within 28 days. You will be informed of the outcome, in writing, as soon as possible. The decision of the Management Committee will be the final internal stage of the Complaints Procedure.

### **STAGE 4 (optional if your group has access to an independent arbitrator)**

If you are not satisfied with the response, you may appeal to (insert name of arbitrator) within 14 days of receiving the written reply. This body acts as an external and independent arbitrator for this Complaints Procedure.