

# **AVP Stoke Complaints Policy and Procedure**

## **1. Policy Statement**

AVP Stoke is committed to delivering the highest standard of service. We welcome feedback and view complaints as an opportunity to learn, improve, and strengthen trust with our service users, volunteers, and the wider community.

We aim to:

- Provide a fair and clear complaints procedure.
  - Ensure everyone knows how to make a complaint and feels confident doing so.
  - Make sure all complaints are handled promptly, sensitively, and professionally.
  - Learn from complaints and take action to improve our services.
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## **2. Scope of this Policy**

This policy applies to:

- Service users
- Volunteers
- Members of the public
- Partner organisations

This policy does not cover:

- Safeguarding concerns (covered by the safeguarding policy)
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## **3. What is a Complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of AVP Stoke's work, staff, or services. Complaints can be made verbally, in writing, or by email.

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## 4. How to Make a Complaint

You can make a complaint by:

- **Email:** hello@wearestoke.org.uk
- **Post:** AVP Stoke, Pennycroft Lane, Uttoxeter, ST14 7BW
- **In person:** By speaking to any staff member or volunteer who will ensure your concern is passed on

We encourage complaints to be made within 3 months of the incident or issue, though later complaints will still be considered depending on the circumstances.

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## 5. Complaints Procedure

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

We aim to resolve minor issues informally and quickly. If you feel comfortable, please raise your concern with a staff member or volunteer directly.

If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, or if it is too serious for informal handling, proceed to Stage 2.

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### Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

A formal complaint should be submitted in writing. The complaint will be acknowledged within **5 working days** and investigated by a manager or trustee not involved in the issue.

You will receive a full written response within **20 working days**, unless further time is needed, in which case you'll be informed of the delay and the reason.

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### **Stage 3 – Appeal**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may appeal in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees within **10 working days** of receiving the response.

The appeal will be reviewed, and a final decision will be communicated within **20 working days**. The Chair's decision is final.

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### **6. Monitoring and Learning**

All complaints will be recorded, monitored, and reviewed annually to identify trends and areas for improvement. Personal data will be handled in line with data protection laws.

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### **7. External Advice and Escalation**

If you are not satisfied with the handling of your complaint, you may contact:

#### **Charity Commission**

Website: [www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity)

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### **8. Confidentiality**

All complaints will be handled sensitively and in line with data protection and confidentiality policies. Only those who need to know will be informed.

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### **9. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if required due to changes in legislation or organisational practice.

**Last reviewed:** 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025