Dòchas Carers Centre SCIO
Supporting Unpaid Carers

General Complaints Policy (Public, Volunteers & Community Participants)

This policy applies to: members of the public, volunteers, befriendees (Circle of Friends participants), community group attendees, partners, referrers, and anyone engaging with Dochas Carers Centre outside the contracted carer support service.

Purpose

To provide a clear and fair process for handling complaints that do not relate to the Council-commissioned carer support service. This policy is separate from the Clause 44 Complaints Procedure and does not involve Argyll & Bute Council.

Who can complain

- Members of the public
- Volunteers
- Befriendees (Circle of Friends)
- Community participants
- Partners and referrers

What you can complain about

- Concerns about Dochas activities not funded under the HSCP contract
- Conduct or behaviour of staff or volunteers
- Access, inclusiveness, communication or support issues
- Safety or quality concerns

How to complain

Complaints may be made verbally, in writing, by email or through our website. Anonymous complaints will be considered where feasible.

Process

1. Acknowledge within 3 working days.
2. Early resolution where possible (within 5 working days).
3. Investigation where needed (target 20 working days).
4. Appeal to a senior manager/Board nominee.

External escalation (when relevant)

This policy does not lead to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). External escalation applies only in specific circumstances:

- OSCR – where concerns relate to serious governance issues or risk of harm.
- Scottish Fundraising Adjudication Panel – for concerns specifically about fundraising practice.

• Police or safeguarding authorities – where immediate risk, harm or criminality is alleged.

Data Protection

All complaints are handled under UK GDPR and stored securely.