

Complaint Reporting Policy

Statement

The organisation is committed to providing the highest level of service to its users but is aware that when service involves a high interaction between people misunderstandings and/or problems can arise.

It is important that any concerns and/or complaints in relation to any aspect of the service provided by the organisation are raised preferably as soon as they arise to allow measures to be taken to investigate them. The organisation views the investigation of complaints as an opportunity to address possible areas of concern and identify, if appropriate, any staff training issues.

Provision for Complaints

The organisation will:

- Take the complaint seriously
- Investigate fully
- Treat confidentially
- Report and act on the outcome of investigation
- Monitor complaints to establish whether there is a pattern

Who can complain?

- The person using the service ("the user") or a former user of the service
- Their nominated representative

If an individual wants to make a complaint on behalf of someone using the service then the Manager/Trustee for Complaints must agree he/she is a suitable representative and that he/she has obtained written permission from the user to proceed on their behalf.

- An individual about the care of a relative

A user may not be able to give written or verbal consent (due to lack of capacity) and a relative may wish to make a complaint about their treatments/support

- Others affected by the action of the organisation

Types of Complaints

These might relate to:

- Management of client safety e.g. a client falls when cycling with a support worker
- Health and Safety e.g. a client falls down the stairs in Autism Jersey offices.
- A complaint or claim resulting from an incident (self-explanatory) – see Incident Reporting Policy
- Rudeness by a member of staff
- Unprofessional behaviour by a member of staff
- Finance e.g. expenses for activities with client excessive

- Information security e.g. breach of client confidentiality

Time Limits for making a complaint

It is advisable to make a complaint as soon as possible whilst details are still fresh. It is considered that the accepted time frame for making a complaint is three months from the time that the problem occurred or that an individual became aware of it.

There is discretion to waive the time limit in exceptional circumstances or where it might be considered unreasonable and a written reason for the delay must be given.

Reporting Protocol

Informal - Stage 1

- the complaint is raised with the member of staff responsible for the support for providing the service as they will usually be the best person to resolve the matter
- the staff member may have been unaware of the matter or it was something that arose unintentionally
- staff must listen to concerns and address them if possible and/or applicable

If this is the case the staff member makes a note of the concern/complaint and how it was resolved. This should be kept in the Complaints file, not the client file, due to Confidentiality.

- Stage 2

- if speaking to the member of staff involved is not an option then their Line Manager/Supervisor/team leader is approached
- the matter may be successfully resolved at this stage

Formal

- If there is no resolution either by speaking to the member of staff or their superior then the complaint must be put in writing to the Manager of the organisation using the Complaints form
- If the complaint is with regard to the Manager then the complaint is referred to the Board of Trustees.
- All written complaints are date stamped on receipt and a letter of acknowledgment sent out.
- Where necessary the organisation's insurers are advised of the complaint.

Investigations

- An investigation is instigated by the Office Manager and a letter sent out to the complainant to this effect.
- Meetings will take place between the Manager, the complainant(s) and the member of staff either all present at the same time or individually depending on whether a face to face meeting is appropriate and/or agreed.

- Meetings are encouraged to ensure that all parties fully understand the issues raised.
- Potential resolutions can be discussed at these meetings.
- The Manager will prepare a report for presentation to the Trustees containing all the information obtained from the parties and outlining the options for resolution.
- The final decision will be made by the Trustees on consideration of the report presented to them.

Outcome of Investigations

The complainant will be advised of the outcome of the investigation in writing within 25 days of the acknowledgment of the complaint.

If, however, the investigation is prolonged due for example to the complex nature of the complaint the Manager will notify the complainant of the progress of the complaint every 20 days as the complaint progresses.

Further Investigations

The initial investigation may lead to further investigations by outside authorities e.g. the Police and all staff must co-operate fully.

Records of Complaints

- All information on a complaint will be kept confidential and only given to people on a “need to know” basis.
- No documentation relating to a complaint should be kept on the client file.
- If a complaint is verbal notes will be taken and confirmed with the complainant before an investigation is commenced.

Staff involved in complaints

- Staff against whom a complaint has been made will always be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint.
- Due to the need for consistency in supporting people with autism, staff will only be removed from supporting that client if complaint is of a serious nature or if requested by parent / guardian / referring agency.
- Staff involved in the complaint investigation will be informed of the outcome of the investigation
- Where the outcome of the investigation results in a change of procedure or policy **all** staff will be advised of the change
- Where there is a resultant disciplinary issue arising staff the disciplinary procedure will be followed