

Independent Resource Centre



FULL INCLUSION TEAM

Complaints

Policy and Procedure

Complaints Statement

*The **Independent Resource Centre** aims to provide service of a standard acceptable to all our User/Members.*

If we fail to do this we want to know about it. This will enable us to not only deal with the specific problem, but also to avoid it happening again.

Our complaints procedure sets out how to take up matters you think are unsatisfactory about the service you have received from us. Ask the receptionist for a Leaflet/Complaints Form. If you would rather talk to someone about the complaints procedure please ask either the receptionist or the advisor.

Recording and Monitoring Complaints

All complaints will be recorded and kept on file, including those which were resolved without being put in writing. The Complaints Monitoring form shall be used to do this. All complaints shall be treated with regard to the Confidentiality policy.

The Co-ordinator will make a report once a year to the Management Committee summarising the nature of complaints received and how they were resolved.

Publicising the Procedure

The Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that posters and leaflets are displayed in the waiting area and interview rooms, welcoming complaints from users, and that posters and leaflets clearly explain the procedure for making the complaint.

The Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that complaints leaflets are available at all outreach sessions and on home visits.

Ensuring Effectiveness

All Management Committee members will receive a copy of the complaints procedure.

Existing and new workers will be introduced to the complaints procedure via induction and training. The procedure will be reviewed annually and amendments should be proposed and agreed by the Management Committee.

Introduction

This policy sets out the procedures we will follow when we receive a complaint from users of the service, an organisation or member of the public. It does not address complaints made by staff or volunteers (dealt with through grievance and disciplinary procedures) not job applicants (recruitment procedure).

This procedure is meant to provide a means to resolve a dispute between the Centre and any complainant. It requires staff and management committee members at every stage to resolve the complaint. Complaints are likely to be in one or more of the following areas:

- Dissatisfaction with our service, such as inadequate work, problems with casework, unacceptable delay or failure to deliver a service etc.
- Disputes between user and the organisation regarding policy, procedures or activities
- Discourtesy or unhelpfulness on the part of staff.

The Procedure

When someone wishes to register a complaint, the following procedures will be adopted.

Where the complaint is against the Co-ordinator, the same procedure will be followed, but with the Chair of the Management Committee substituting for the Co-ordinator's role at all stages.

Preliminary Stage

The complaint should be received either via completion of a complaints form or by a request to make a verbal complaint.

Stage 1

The complainant will be invited to speak to the Welfare Rights Officer, Education/Information Worker, or the member of staff dealing with the complaint and the Co-ordinator to discuss said complaint.

This may be done in person or by phone, whichever is appropriate. The line manager will keep a record of the conversation on the complaints monitoring sheet. The line manager will endeavour to resolve the matter.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, or where it is not possible to use stage 1 above (for example if it is not convenient for them to phone or visit the office) then refer to Stage 2 below.

Stage 1 should be completed within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.

Stage 2

The complainant will be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Co-ordinator, marked Private and Confidential, providing as much detail of the complaint as possible.

If the complainant is not able to put their complaint in writing the complainant will be offered an interview with the Co-ordinator or her/his nominee. The role of the Co-ordinator or nominee at this meeting will be confined to putting the complaints in writing, obtain the complainants approval for the contents of this, and ask the complainant to sign to indicate they agree with the contents. The complainant can choose to work with a third party at this stage and throughout the process.

The Co-ordinator will then investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve it. The Co-ordinator may delegate any aspect of the investigation to nominee.

If the complaint involves a member(s) of staff the Co-ordinator will offer the opportunity for the member of staff to put forward their account, either by written statement or by presentation to the Panel.

The Co-ordinator will ensure that all complainants receive a response in writing within 10 working days of the letter/complaint notes being received. This letter will summarise what investigations have been carried out and

what action, if any, is proposed to resolve the matter. A copy of this letter should be attached to the complaints form.

If a response by letter is unsuitable, the complainant will be offered an interview with the Co-ordinator to provide the response verbally. This meeting should be held within 10 working days as before. A written record of this interview will be kept and signed by the complainant.

If the complainant is not satisfied at this stage they should ask for the matter to be dealt with under Stage 3 of the complaints procedure.

Stage 3

Where the matter is not resolved by stage 2, the Co-ordinator should immediately refer the complaint to the Management Committee Complaints Panel, sending copies of all written correspondence to Panel members.

The Complaints Panel will comprise of the Chair of the Management Committee and the designated Complaints Officer. The Complaints Officer will be responsible for conveying the Panel and one other Management Committee member – in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair will become the convener.

The complainant will be informed immediately by the Complaints officer, or Chair that this is being done and that the Panel will also be contacting the staff member(s) against whom the complaint is made.

The panel will review the decision made at Stage 3 and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved.

The Complaints Panel will notify the complainant of its reasons and decision within 15 working days of having received notice of the complaint. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Complaints Officer will be responsible for ensuring records of the meeting are kept and the Complaints monitoring form is completed.

The Complaints Officer will be responsible for reporting the Panel's findings of the next meeting of the Management Committee.

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