

SERVICE USER COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Inclusion Hampshire aims to deliver a professional service that responds to the needs of its service users in whatever capacity. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that professional standards of service provision are adhered to and we continually strive to improve this service through training and policy reviews with an aim to developing best practice.

However there are times when service users feel a valid complaint needs to be made and it is our intent to take all complaints seriously and to respond in an honest, open and fair manner.

Staff who are responsible for the delivery of services are to ensure that those using their services are aware of their right to make a complaint and the procedures set out in this policy.

Complaints may be verbal or written and may be made personally by a service user or on behalf of the service user by a close relative or someone directly involved in their care, **provided the service user has consented to the complaint being made.**

All complaints should be made as soon after the cause as possible and will be dealt with promptly within the time frames set out below. It is also hoped that complaints can be resolved as informally as possible. Notwithstanding, those members of staff who deal with a complaint are to record the details, action taken, including any investigation and the outcomes.

Service users should be assured that making a complaint will not affect their right to receive a service from Inclusion Hampshire unless their complaint is found to be unfounded and malicious, in which case their continued right to receive the service will be reviewed. Equally, in exercising their right to make a complaint, Inclusion Hampshire will ensure that service users are neither victimised nor discriminated against. Depending on the nature and circumstances of the complaint, consideration will however be given to whether the complainant should continue to use the relevant service whilst the complaint is being investigated.

Any member of staff considered guilty of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct as a result of a service user's complaint will be dealt with separately under Inclusion Hampshire's disciplinary procedures.

Staff' covers Inclusion Hampshire trustees and employees, volunteers, work experience learners, trainees and apprentices.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be dealt with as a matter of confidentiality; any details or information relevant to the complaint will only be shared with those who have a right or a need to know (e.g. those required to investigate the complaint). This right to confidentiality extends to both the service user making the complaint and any member of staff who might be the subject of a complaint.

Complaints Procedure

1. A service user may make a complaint to any member of staff responsible for the delivery of the relevant service. Where the complaint relates to the staff responsible for the service delivery, the service user may then make their complaint direct to the staff member's line manager or Inclusion Hampshire's Chief Executive.
2. In line with the intent to deal with complaints as informally as possible, the member of staff receiving the complaint should endeavour to resolve the matter immediately. To ensure a satisfactory resolution it is good practice to ask the complainant what they want to see happen as a result of their complaint. Where a complaint can be resolved informally at this level the member of staff dealing with it should nonetheless ensure the complainant has been made aware of all the options open for pursuing the complaint.
3. Details of the complaint must be passed by the staff member to their line manager who will ensure that the details and outcome have been fully and properly recorded.
4. In the event that a complaint can not be resolved informally, the member of staff who first received it should refer the matter, as soon as possible, to their line manager. If the complaint involves the line manager it should be referred to the Inclusion Hampshire's Chief Executive. The line manager or Inclusion Hampshire's Chief Executive will then be responsible for fully investigating the complaint and submitting a written response to the complainant with 10 working days. This response should address all the issues raised in the complaint and, if substantiated, any remedial action being taken. If the complaint is unsubstantiated the response should explain why not and set out what further action the complainant may take.
5. If unsatisfied with the outcome of the investigation the complainant should submit details of their complaint in writing together with the reasons they are dissatisfied to the Inclusion Hampshire's Chief Executive or, if the Inclusion Hampshire's Chief Executive conducted the initial investigation, to the Chairman of the Trustees. Inclusion Hampshire's Chief Executive or Chairman will review the initial investigation and, if necessary, conduct a separate investigation and inform the complainant of the outcome within 15 working days of receipt. If unsatisfied with the decision of the Inclusion

Hampshire's Chief Executive the complainant may appeal to the Chairman of the Trustees. In all cases the decision of the Chairman is final.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy and that regular reviews take place.

All staff have a responsibility to adhere to this policy and will be made aware of this policy as part of their induction, supervision and training.

Failure for staff to act in line with this policy will result in disciplinary action.