



## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **STATEMENT**

SEND and You has a complaints procedure that sets out how to take up matters you think are unsatisfactory about the service you have received. Ask the office & finance manager for a form.

If you would rather talk to someone about the complaints procedure, please ask the local co-ordinator or team member who sees you.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **1. STATEMENT**

SEND and You has a Complaints Procedure that sets out how to take up matters you think are unsatisfactory about the service you have received. Ask the Office and Finance Manager for a leaflet. If you would rather talk to someone about the Complaints Procedure please ask the Local Co-ordinator or Team Member who sees you.

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

This policy sets out the procedures we will follow when we receive a complaint from service users, an organisation or member of the public. It does not address complaints made by staff or volunteers (dealt with Grievance and Disciplinary procedures) nor job applicants (Recruitment procedure).

### **3. THE PROCEDURE**

When someone wishes to register a complaint, the following procedure should be adopted. Where the complaint is against the Head of Service, the same procedure will be followed, but with the Chair of the Board of Trustees substituting for the Head of Service's role at all stages.

#### **Stage One:**

The complaint can be received either via completion of a complaints form, verbally, or in writing. If a verbal complaint is received, the complainant will be asked to put the matter in writing, being helped to complete a complaint form if necessary.

The complainant will be invited to speak to the Head of Service to discuss the complaint with them. This can be done in person or by 'phone, whichever is appropriate.

The Head of Service will endeavour to resolve the matter and will keep a record of the discussion. If the complaint involves a member of staff, or a volunteer, they should be asked for their account.

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 will be completed within 10 working days of receiving the complaint and the complainant will be sent a letter confirming any resolution agreed or indicating that the complaint will be passed to a nominated member of the Board of Trustees if the matter remains unresolved.

**Stage Two:**

The Board member will then investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve it. The Chair should be informed that there is a complaint, but no detail should be given to him/her or to other Board members who may be involved in a Panel at a later stage.

If the complaint involves a member(s) of staff the Board member should offer the opportunity for the member of staff to put forward their account.

The Board member will ensure that all complainants receive a response in writing within 15 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 Board member to provide the response verbally. This meeting should be held within 15 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 Three:**

Where the matter is not resolved by Stage 2, the Board member should immediately refer the complaint to a Panel of Board members, sending copies of all written correspondence to them.

The Panel will be comprised of the Chair of the Board and two other Board members. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair will become the convenor.

The complainant will be informed immediately by the original Board member, 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 2 and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved.

The Panel will notify the complainant of its reasons and decision within 20 working days of having received notice of the complaint. The Panel's decision will be final. A record of Panel discussion and decisions will be kept.

The Chair will be responsible for reporting the Panel's findings to the next meeting of the Board.



#### **4. 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 will be used to do this. All complaints will be treated appropriately with regard to the Confidentiality Policy.

The Head of Service will make a report once a year to the Board of Trustees summarising the nature of complaints received and how they were resolved.

#### **5. PUBLICISING THE PROCEDURE**

The Head of Service is responsible for ensuring that posters are displayed in the office base welcoming complaints from users and clearly explain the procedure for making the complaint.

The Head of Service is responsible for ensuring complaints leaflets are available at all outreach sessions, on home visits and easily accessible via the website.

#### **6. ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROCEDURE**

All Board 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 Board.

#### **RECORDING & MONITORING COMPLIMENTS**

A record should be kept of positive and complimentary comments. Where individuals are expressly mentioned, a copy should be placed on their personnel file.

Date procedure was agreed: .....

Date of review: .....

Person responsible for review: .....

**COMPLAINTS FORM**

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

..... Post code .....

Tel. No. ....

Email: .....

Member of staff involved (if relevant) .....

Date of incident: .....

Nature of complaint: (Please continue overleaf if necessary)

Signed:.....

