

Concerns, Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedure

1. Policy

Cardiff Mind believes that everyone with whom we come into contact has the right to express their views about the services we provide and the way in which we behave. This includes comments about staff members, visitors, other service users or volunteers.

We welcome all feedback on our staff and services both positive and negative and our Management Committee values this information to improve the organisation's performance.

There may be times when these views are in the form of a complaint or an expression of concern. We will view these positively, will treat them seriously and will make the necessary changes for us to improve.

In order to ensure that we respond appropriately to concerns, complaints and compliments we have developed a procedure to ensure that these are systematically recorded, addressed and reported.

NB

The procedure is designed to cover all of our service activities but does not extend to areas of activity that have their own arrangements such as Appeals against Notices served or bans.

Nor does the procedure extend to issues raised that are dealt with under our Personnel Policies and Procedures or Codes of Conduct which have their own processes.

If you feel that you have been discriminated against (see Cardiff Mind's Equal Opportunities Policy) this may also generate a complaint.

2. Procedure

1. Concerns

A concern is when someone has an issue that they wish to bring to our attention which falls short of a complaint. Usually these arise when we have made an obvious but not significant mistake or have omitted to do something.

It can also cover situations when something bad could have resulted from our action or inaction, but fortunately did not or something that

might happen in the future if we are not careful and learn from the experience.

Concerns may be raised informally with any staff member verbally or in writing.

The staff member will offer the opportunity to choose whether to pursue the issue as a complaint or whether there is a more obvious way forward to deal with the matter to which the person will agree.

The staff member should record the concern and also the agreed timescale for resolution – this information and action taken or to be taken should be shared with line management. The person raising the concern may request a copy of this record if they wish.

NB Concerns that have a Health and Safety dimension should be recorded separately and will ordinarily require a risk assessment to be undertaken.

It may be possible that the time scale for delivering the agreed solution might have been optimistic – in that case the person should be informed of a more realistic date.

If however the agreed action does not take place or has not satisfactorily addressed concerns, there is the right to pursue this as a complaint.

2. Complaints

2.1 Example

Complaints can cover the way we provide services in terms of access or perhaps the attitude of staff, volunteers or service users.

Complaints may be quite complex to understand and may require gathering of information from a number of different sources in order to get the full picture and proper response.

When the complaint relates to staff attitudes or those of fellow service users we are particularly committed to ensuring that principles of equity, respect, dignity and equality of opportunity are maintained. These principles extend across the organisation and will be applied to those about whom a complaint has been made in the course of investigating the complaint and in any subsequent considerations.

There may be alternative routes available to deal with specific issues. For example, there is a separate Appeals Mechanism to deal with Notices to Seek Possession. Where such routes exist Cardiff Mind will

ensure that the person affected is advised of how these decisions may be challenged.

Another example might be when the access criteria for a particular service are not met and consequently the service is denied. On such occasions the person may request a review of circumstances.

If a service is to be withdrawn without a service user's agreement or any limitation put on the service there will be written confirmation provided that will specify how to appeal against the decision.

2.2 Process

In making a complaint there are 4 stages:

Stage 1

A Stage 1 complaint is when the situation can be dealt with informally by an apology or acceptance that a mistake has been made and the person who raises the issue is content not to make a formal complaint following discussion.

Stage 2

This is where the concern becomes a complaint and the formal process begins.

There is a form available specifically for this purpose from the Office at 166 Newport Road. However, letters, electronic mail, telephone calls or verbal communication may access the procedure.

Staff receiving communications that are ambiguous about whether the matter should proceed via the complaints route should ensure that the Finance and Admin Manager acknowledges the communication and finds out whether there is a wish for the matter to be treated as a formal complaint. This acknowledgement/clarification letter will be sent in 7 working days (working days are taken to be Monday to Friday but not including Public Holidays).

Once it is clear that the situation is required to be dealt with as a complaint, a meeting with the complainant will be arranged by the Manager of the service and may involve the Key worker/staff member (this may vary depending on the nature of the complaint) as soon as practicable - ideally within 14 working days. The date and time set will be made in negotiation with the complainant and will suit their availability. The venue may be at 166 Newport Road or in an alternative suitable building. The complainant may wish to invite a friend, relative

or another person of their choice to provide support or act as an advocate. If the complainant wishes for such support but cannot identify a suitable person, Cardiff Mind will do its best to arrange independent advocacy.

At the meeting we will try to clarify the nature of the complaint and if possible agree a way forward. Any such agreement will be written up by the Manager and will be sent to the complainant for confirmation.

Stage 3

If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 1 or 2, or the complainant asserts that the Stage 2 agreement has not been honoured, the complaint should be forwarded to the Chief Executive or in his/her absence the Chair of the Management Committee (see also the footnote below). S/he will send a letter to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 working days.

The complainant will be invited to attend a meeting and as before may bring a friend/advocate of their choosing if they feel that this will be beneficial in assisting them through this process. This could be in person or via Teams etc.

At this meeting it may be agreed that there is need to investigate the complaint further. Any further investigation will be undertaken by a manager or other suitable person who has not been involved in the complaint in order to ensure independence. This investigation will take no longer than 28 days.

The Chief Executive will convene a further meeting to discuss the information from the investigation with the complainant and will consider any further representations. The Chief Executive will then determine the organisation's response.

It may be that an agreement is reached in whole or partially or perhaps there is a difference of opinion that cannot be reconciled.

The Chief Executive (or Chair of the Management Committee) will provide within 10 working days a written response following the meeting to confirm any decision/agreement or to outline the course of action to be taken. As part of any communication the reasons for any decision taken and any action resulting from the complaint will be clearly identified. Any information that is given will adhere to the Confidentiality arrangements within Cardiff Mind. It will also indicate that there is a right of Appeal within 14 days of receipt.

(Complaints specifically relating to the Chief Executive will be dealt with by the Chair of the Management Committee and Complaints about any Manager will be dealt with in the first instance by the Chief Executive)

Stage 4 – Appeal and Review

This stage is used for situations in which the complainant feels that the decision reached at Stage 3 has failed to take into account significant and material information that was not made available at the time or has failed to follow the policies and procedures of Cardiff Mind.

The complainant will be requested to identify in writing the reasons for which the decision reached in Stage 3 is being challenged. The appeal must be made within 14 days of the written response under Stage 3 of the procedure being received.

This stage requires the establishment of an Appeals Sub-Committee of the Management Committee to comprise at least 3 members.

The Appeals Sub-Committee will consider the written material from the Stage 3 hearing in the first instance to see whether there is evidence to justify an appeal being heard. The decision whether or not to proceed will be notified to the complainant giving the proposed date for the hearing or reasons why the appeal process is deemed inappropriate.

If the Sub-Committee considers that there is justification for an Appeal this will be heard within 21 days. As in other stages the complainant may be accompanied. The Sub-Committee will consider the representations and may call witnesses for clarification of issues raised. The decision of the Sub-Committee will be final as far as the internal processes are concerned.

2.3 Reporting Arrangements

The Management Committee will receive statistical information on a quarterly basis on the number of concerns and complaints received together with their current status in the process.

The Management Committee will also receive specific information on any changes to working practices that have been generated in response to concerns or complaints.

2.4 Persistent Unjustified and Unsubstantiated Complaining

In rare circumstances it is possible that an individual may subject the organisation or an individual to a series of persistent, unjustified or unsubstantiated complaints. This can result in a great deal of time and effort being wasted in responding and can also cause distress to staff and volunteers.

In such cases, and following discussion with the Management Committee, the Chief Executive may issue a warning to the complainant that continuation of such behaviour may lead to future complaints being considered not worthy of investigation.

3. Compliments

Everyone in Cardiff Mind is committed to doing the best that they can and it is good to be told that one is doing one's job well. It is also important that Senior Management and the Management Committee are able to recognise staff and volunteers who provide an exceptional service or have made a real difference to people's lives.

We will establish and maintain a central record of compliments and expressions of appreciation which are made in writing and will report these as a matter of course to the Management Committee.

We will also develop a pro-forma to record compliments received via the telephone although these will only be used by the Office Manager to ensure a degree of impartiality.

The Chief Executive will respond in writing within 15 working days to any individual or organisation expressing a compliment to confirm that the positive feedback is appreciated and will also write to the team/staff member involved to record the Management Committee's appreciation of a job well done.

4. Use of other Organisations' Complaints Procedures

People who wish to complain about Cardiff Mind and its services also have an opportunity to use the Complaints Procedures of other organisations with whom we have partnership arrangements. It is however likely that these Third Parties will expect that the issue would have been raised initially with Cardiff Mind itself.

Supported Accommodation:

United Welsh Housing Association, Y Borth, 13 Beddau Way,
Caerphilly, CF83 2AX

Phone: 0330 159 6080

Email: tellmemore@unitedwelsh.com

Linc Cymru Housing Association, 387 Newport Rd, Cardiff, CF24 1GG

Phone: 0800 072 0966

Email: contact.centre@linc-cymru.co.uk

and/or

Housing Support Team, Cardiff City Council, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff. CF10 4UW

Phone: 029 2057 0750

Domiciliary Support

Cardiff City Council Adult Services Complaints Officer

Room 367, County Hall, Cardiff, CF10 4UW

Phone: 029 2087 2087

Email: socialservicescomplaints@cardiff.gov.uk.

Or

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

Rhud y Car

Merthyr Tydfil

CF48 1UZ

Phone: 0300 7900 126.

Email: CIW@gov.wales

Non-Accommodation Support Services

Chief Executive, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Maes y Coed

Road, Cardiff CF14 4HH.

Phone: 029 218 36318

Email: concerns@wales.nhs.uk

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

1 Old Field Rd, Pencoed, Bridgend CF35 5LJ

Phone: 0300 790 0203

Email: ask@ombudsman.wales