

Caring Hands in the Vale

Complaints Procedure

This procedure sets out the steps we will take if we receive a complaint from users of our service, and organisation or a member of the public. It does not address complaints made by members of staff or volunteers or job applicants.

The Steering Group of Caring Hands in the Vale undertakes to investigate all complaints, and if the complaint is upheld, will decide on the reparation.

Making a Complaint – General:

Should a service user wish to make a complaint about any of the services provided by Caring Hands in the Vale, the following procedure should be adopted. Where the complaint is regarding the Community Worker, the same procedure will be followed, but with the Chair of the Steering Group substituting for the Community Worker's role, at all stages.

The complainant should be given a copy of the Complaint's Procedure and invited to put their complaint in writing. If the complainant does not wish to, or is unable to put the complaint in writing, a verbal statement of complaint should be accepted. It will be the duty of the Community Worker to ensure that the details of any verbal complaint are noted and that the complainant agrees with the content of the notes.

Verbal complaints concerning waiting for services or regarding opening times will be treated as informal and outside the scope of this procedure, although a record may be kept for monitoring purposes.

The Community Worker shall be authorised by the Steering Group to deal with any complaints quickly, but informal manner at the first stage.

Making and Initial Complaint – Stage One:

The complainant should be invited to speak to the Community worker to discuss the complaint with them. This can be undertaken in person or by telephone and the Community Worker will keep a record of the conversation.

At this stage all possible attempts should be made to resolve the complaint on the same day, and in any event, as soon as practicable after the complaint has been made. The outcome should normally be given in writing, except for informal complaints as described above, and the level of reparation should also be detailed, where appropriate.

The Community Worker shall be available to explain the outcome verbally should a complainant wish. The complainant should be informed of the next stage of the Complaints Procedure should they be dissatisfied with the outcome.

Stage One of the Complaints Procedure should be completed within five working days of receipt of the complaint.

Making a Further Complaint – Stage Two:

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage One, the complainant should be invited to make a written complaint to the Steering Group. Where a complainant is unable to put the complaint in writing the Community Worker should offer assistance by writing down the details of the complaint, together with the reasons for wishing the progress to Stage Two of the Complaints Procedure. The Community Worker should read these details back to the complainant for agreement as to their accuracy. This complaint should then be referred to the Steering Group.

The Steering Group will notify the complainant in writing that they are dealing with the matter.

The Steering Group will review the events in Stage One of the Complaints Procedure, and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved. This may involve interviewing the complainant if necessary.

Should the Steering Group feel that it is necessary, they may need to seek legal advice.

The Steering Group will notify the complainant of their decision, together with the reasons for the decision within fifteen working days of having received the complaint, unless to notify the complainant of any delay giving details of the reason for such delay.

The Steering Group's decision is final and will be recorded in detail in the minutes of the next Steering Group meeting.

Reparation:

If the Community Worker or Steering Group find that the complaint is upheld, reparation will be offered to the complainant. In deciding the level of reparation, the Community Worker or Steering Group should make their decision based upon the facts of the case, together with any loss or inconvenience incurred by the complainant.

Options include:

- An apology, written or verbal from the Community Worker or any other person concerned.
- An undertaking and subsequent report on improving or developing policies, procedures and guidelines, where these appear to be at fault or absent
- In exceptional cases, the Steering Group can decide to make reparation by financial compensation.

It may be necessary for the Steering Group to seek legal advice to ensure that professional indemnity issues are explored and eliminated.

Recording and Monitoring Complaints:

All complaints will be recorded and kept on a file marked 'complaints'.

The Community Worker will make a report once a year to the Steering Group summarising the nature of any complaints received, and how they were resolved.

Date Agreed and Adopted: _____

Signed by Chair of the Steering Group: _____