

Complaints Policy

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Name of chair: Joanne Bowe

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Document Summary: This policy sets out a framework for both service users and staff to ensure that Hospice at Home West Cumbria provides effective and fair management of its complaints processes and procedures.

Document Control Table

Policy Number	Gen/Pol/01
Equality Impact Assessment date	

Amendment history

Version	Date	Author
1	April 2017	Linda Hewitt
2	Mar 2019	Julie Monk
3	Sept 2020	Julie Monk
4	July 2022	Julie Monk

Policy Impact Assessment

The impact assessment is used to ensure:

- we do not inadvertently discriminate as a service provider or as an employer
- that the information governance implications of any changes in the way we work, implicit in any new policies or revisions to existing policies, are considered and addressed appropriately

To be completed and attached to all policies when submitted to the appropriate committee for consideration and approval.

		Yes/No	Comments
1.	Equality Impact		
a.	Does the policy affect one group more or less favourably than another on the basis of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - race - ethnic origins - nationality - gender - culture - religion or belief - sexual orientation (including lesbian, gay and bisexual people) - age - disability (e.g., physical, sensory or learning) - mental health 	No	
b.	If potential discrimination has been highlighted, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	n/a	
c.	Is the impact of the policy likely to be negative? If so, can the impact be avoided or reduced?	n/a	
2.	Information Governance Impact		
a.	Is the policy (or any of its associated procedures) likely to have an adverse impact on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - information quality - information security - confidentiality - data protection requirements 	No	
b.	If so, have these issues already been raised with SMT? What action has been agreed?	n/a	

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1. Purpose

1.1 We realise that things can sometimes go wrong and people may not be happy with the service they have received. At Hospice at Home West Cumbria, we are committed to providing excellent service to all our service users as set out in our Hospice Charter. We value diversity and do everything we can to make our services available to as many people as possible. So that we can improve and get things right, we welcome complaints and comments from our service users.

1.2 Complaints are valuable as they:

- give service users the opportunity to provide feedback on services
- give us the opportunity to put things right where mistakes have been made
- allow us to improve our services and make sure mistakes are not repeated
- enable us to tailor services to service user needs

1.3 Complaints can be made:

- in person at any Hospice at Home West Cumbria office
- by telephone 01900 705200
- by e-mail info@hhwc.org.uk
- by letter to

Mrs C Robertson
Business Support Manager
Hospice at Home West Cumbria
Therapy and Information Centre
10 Finkle Street
Workington
Cumbria
CA14 2BB

- by someone acting on behalf of a service user
- with the assistance of other organisations including:
 - Citizens Advice Bureau
 - Voluntary and charitable organisations with the use of facilities and information provided for people including:
 - Those with a disability
 - anyone who may need assistance with communication
 - people whose first language is not English

2. Introduction

2.1 This policy sets out a framework for both service users and staff to ensure that Hospice at Home West Cumbria provides effective and fair management of its complaints processes and procedures. If possible, staff should remedy or deal with

complaints and comments informally before they reach the stage of a formal complaint.

2.2 This policy guidance should be followed by all relevant staff.

3. Overview of process

3.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, where someone is unhappy about the service, actions, or lack of action by Hospice at Home West Cumbria or a person or body acting on its behalf.

3.2 The policy covers complaints relating to the following:

- **Where we have failed to provide a service which we said we would**
- **The standards of the service were not acceptable**
- **We provided the service in an unfair or discriminatory manner**

3.3 The policy **does not** cover complaints:

- in areas where other statutory procedures, rights of appeal or legal remedies already exist
- about employment matters from members of staff
- about Trustees - complaints of this nature will be dealt with by the relevant code of conduct and governance procedures
- about financial impropriety – these will be referred to the Head of Finance
- that refer to matters over six months old unless the complainant has good reasons why they didn't come forward sooner

4. Management of the process

4.1 We will:

- nominate an individual to deal with the complaint
- make sure that key employees are properly trained in complaint handling
- record complaints properly
- review complaints, causes and changes to service provision arising from them
- identify trends in respect of complaints and review services accordingly

4.2 Service users need to inform Hospice at Home West Cumbria of their complaint within three months of the problem occurring.

4.3 Hospice at Home West Cumbria has a 2 stage process that is designed to support the effective management of complaints. It is expected that complaints will go through each stage in turn and should only be escalated to the next stage if the service user

believes that the response is unclear, unhelpful, incomplete, or wrong in some respect. A complaint can be resolved at any time during the two stages.

STAGE ONE

We will aim to contact the service user within 3 working days of the service user getting in touch.

This will include a relevant member of staff:

- contacting the service user by telephone to introduce themselves and confirm the complaint has been received
- getting more details about the complaint
- establishing what the service user would like to happen
- trying to resolve the problem and agree with the service user what will happen next

An investigation will be undertaken to establish the facts and the service user will be contacted usually within 10 working days, with a full explanation including

- The findings
- Any recommendations
- Any proposals
- Whether or not the complaint has been resolved

Once a complaint has been closed at Stage One, a complainant has 30 days to come back to us and say that they are not happy about what we have done. This will then be taken to Stage Two of the complaints process.

If 30 days have passed, and the issue is referred back to us, the complaint will be treated as a new complaint.

STAGE TWO

If after receipt of the response, the service user is still dissatisfied because they believe that the response at Stage One is unclear, incomplete or wrong they can request that the complaint is taken to Stage Two.

The service user needs to inform us why they want to move to Stage Two and what they think we should have done to resolve their complaint at Stage One.

We will contact the service user within 3 working days of them asking us to move their complaint to Stage Two.

The complaint will then be investigated by a senior manager or the CEO who will review the decision and decision-making process.

We aim to contact the service user within 20 working days to let them know what we have found out and what we will do to resolve their complaint.

If the service user is still not satisfied with the decision they may contact the Charity Commission <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity> Helpline 0345 015 4033.

If the complaint is regarding a fundraising activity, it can be referred to the Fundraising Regulator:

2nd Floor CAN Mezzanine Building
49-51 East Road,
London N1 6AH
0300 999 3407

5. Persistent and unreasonable complainants

5.1 Where a service user persists in pursuing a complaint, which has no reasonable basis, or where Hospice at Home West Cumbria has already taken reasonable action in response to the complaint, we will exercise discretion as to when a matter will be regarded as closed and will not be reinvestigated.

6. Equality and diversity

6.1 We value equality and diversity and do everything we can to make our services available to as many people as possible. In relation to complaints, we will ensure that:

- complaints will be dealt with impartially, objectively and professionally
- complaints will be taken seriously
- no one will receive adverse or discriminatory treatment as a result of making a complaint

7. Complaints policy information to service users

7.1 We know that people won't use the complaints procedure if they don't know it exists, so we will publicise it widely by:

- producing information which clearly explain how to complain
- posting information on the website

8. Complaints policy information to staff

8.1 Staff will be briefed on the Complaints Policy in line with this document and key staff will receive training on this Policy and the detail of the process.

9. Monitoring and reporting arrangements

9.1 Complaints and comments are a major source of information about what people think of the service we provide. To make sure the system is working we will:

- Undertake surveys of users and user groups
- Undertake detailed analysis of the complaints process to highlight problem areas and change things accordingly

9.2 Senior Management Team will review:

- how many and what type of complaints and comments received
- how many complaints are resolved at each step of the process
- how many complaints are resolved within the target timescale
- changes to service provision arising from complaints and comments
- trends concerning complaints

9.3 The number and type of complaints received will be published annually in the Annual Review.

9.4 All complaints will be taken to the HR and Governance Committee and notified to the Board.

9.5 All information will remain confidential within the terms of Hospice at Home West Cumbria's Privacy Policy.