

COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Merdale Organisation will actively pursue any complaints received in connection with its services, staff / volunteer conduct or organised activities. This policy sets out what will be done to ensure this happens.

Staff and volunteers will acknowledge problems or issues and follow a staged complaints procedure. Whoever the complainant contacts first will ensure that they listen sympathetically to the concerns with the aim of resolving a complaint at this first opportunity. Dealing with complaints is the responsibility of everyone. Where appropriate, staff and volunteers will be trained in appropriate skills and behaviours to ensure the approach to complaints is consistent, of a high standard, and addressed with a “user first” ethos.

Aims of the Policy/Procedure

- To enable all staff and volunteers to understand the importance of a speedy and effective response to a complaint.
- To ensure a consistent approach to all complaints.
- To help identify recurring problem areas so that improvements can be made.

Responsibility

The Centre Manager is responsible for the development and monitoring of this policy and making sure all staff and volunteers know and understand their responsibilities. He/she will ensure that complaints are recorded, monitored and satisfactorily resolved. A summary of complaints received will be reported at Trustee meetings.

Definition

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with a service or the organisation, its staff or volunteers, that needs a response.

Procedures

All complaints are logged and recorded by the member of staff or volunteer who receives the complaint in accordance with data protection regulations. This will show:

- Date and time of complaint
- Name of staff member completing the record
- Short description of complaint
- Action taken
- Outcomes

Complaints may be received by:

- Letter
- Email
- Telephone
- Face to face

The individual who logs the complaint is responsible for informing a Centre Manager this has happened and making sure the information is accurate and logged as soon as possible.

This recording is vital in making sure the complainant is not repeatedly asked for information again, should the complaint be escalated.

Outcomes are recorded when the complaint has been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

The aim is to resolve all complaints as swiftly as possible. Complaints not resolved at the first point of contact will be acknowledged via letter, email or SMS within 5 working days of receipt. Complainants will be advised in this communication of the complaint procedure and details of who they can speak to about it. This will be supplied at all stages.

Procedure

There are three stages to the complaint procedure.

Stage 1 Resolve at the first point of contact

All attempts should be made to resolve the complaint immediately by the person who receives the complaint. It is envisaged that the majority of complaints will be resolved at this stage.

If the complainant decides they are not satisfied, or the member of staff is unable to resolve the issue, the complaint moves to Stage Two.

Stage 2 Line Manager

It is envisaged that all complaints should be resolved and dealt with satisfactorily from the viewpoint of the complainant at this stage. The complaint will be reviewed by a Centre Manager who will investigate and respond to the complainant within 10 working days.

If the complainant is not satisfied he/she will be informed of the right for their complaint to be dealt with by the Chair of Trustees at Stage 3, or if the complaint is about a Centre Manager, he/she be informed of their right of complaint to be dealt with by the Chair of Trustees.

Stage 3 Escalated Complaint to Chair of Trustees

Complaints at this stage are considered to be very serious. The complaint is passed to the Chair of Trustees. He/she will investigate the complaint, gather all available evidence give a written response to the complainant within 5 working days. If this is not possible the complainant will be kept updated regularly on progress whilst the complaint is being investigated.

It is the intention that all complaints will be resolved at this point.

Complaints about the Chair of Trustees

If the complaint is about the Chair of Trustees, complainants will be invited to complain to the Hon Secretary of the Meridale Organisation Trustees who will arrange for three Trustees to meet, investigate and resolve the issue. A representative will send the complainant a full written response within two days of its meeting.

The Trustees will review this statement periodically and no later than three years from the date below.

Signed: (On behalf of the Meridale Organisation)

Name:

Position:

Date: