

# Complaints Policy and Procedure

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## **Julia's House Complaints Procedure**

**Definition of complaint:** 'An expression of dissatisfaction requiring a response' (*Citizen's Charter task Force*)

All complaints should be dealt with as quickly as possible. They must always be investigated thoroughly and fairly. The unsatisfactory handling of a complaint may be the reason for a further complaint. Complaints should be seen as positive feedback from children and families, and need to be treated fairly and impartially. They should be viewed as an opportunity to improve our services.

- 1.1 Most complaints can and should be dealt with at a local level and should easily be resolved, provided effective action is taken immediately by front line staff.
- 1.2 The investigation of serious formal complaints is the responsibility of senior staff and must not be delegated to junior staff whether medical, nursing or other any other profession. This does not, of course, preclude these staff being asked to assist in the investigation of such complaints.
- 1.3 All written complaints must receive a response from the Chief Executive, Chairman or relevant head of department as appropriate.
- 1.4 The procedures to be followed are set out in the following pages. It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of these and all staff will read the Complaints Policy within their induction period.
- 1.5 Staff who are related to or friends of, the complainant should not be involved in investigating or judging the complaint. The matter must be dealt with by another member of staff.
- 1.6 In cases where a complaint highlights inadequacies in the charity's services, it is the responsibility of the appropriate manager to ensure that action is taken to remedy the situation.

### **Verbal Complaints**

- 1 Any member of staff receiving a verbal complaint should try and to resolve this immediately if this is appropriate. Untrained staff must notify a trained member of staff that a complaint has been made.

If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, or if it concerns the activities of another member of staff, it must be referred to a more senior

member of staff. The senior member of staff should then attempt to resolve the matter with the complainant if this appears feasible or appropriate. In the case of a complaint from a child or their family, a note should be made in the child or families records.

- 2 If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, and it is unlikely to be resolved within five working days, a written acknowledgment should be sent to the complainant by the appropriate section head within two working days.

Once the investigation has been completed, a full written reply should be sent within 20 days to the complainant. This reply should include information on what to do if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

- 3 Any verbal complaints involving serious abuse, death, breach of confidentiality, unexplained injury or theft over £500, should be immediately referred to the respective manager who should advise the Chief Executive straightaway.
- 4 If the complainant is not willing to or able to send a written complaint but wishes the matter to be pursued, the senior member of staff should arrange for a record of the complaint to be made and for the complainant to sign it. Alternatively, should the complainant wish to have a personal meeting with a member of the management team, this should be arranged as soon as possible. The complaint should then be dealt with in accordance with the principles set out for a written complaint. See procedure below.

### **Written Complaints Received by Staff**

- 1 All written complaints must be acknowledged within two working days of receipt. A copy of the complaint and acknowledgement should be sent to the Chief Executive, Chairman or Head of Department within this timescale.
- 2 The appropriate Department Head will investigate the complaint and ensure all points raised are answered.
- 3 The appropriate signatory will draft a response which should be signed and sent to the complainant within twenty working days of receipt of the written complaint. The reply will include information on the complainant's right of appeal if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation.

- 4 Where it is not possible to complete the investigation and reach a conclusion within the timescale the Chief Executive or section head will write to the complainant advising him/her of the reason for the delay. The outcome of the investigation will then be sent to the complainant within 5 days of the investigation being complete.

### **Complaints Received Directly by Chief Executive**

- 1 All complaints received will be acknowledged by the Chief Executive, or in his absence his appointed deputy within two working days.
- 2 The Chief Executive will investigate the complaint, with, if appropriate, the Head of Department.
- 3 The Chief Executive will write to the complainant within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint with the outcome of the investigation. This reply will also contain information regarding the complainant's right of appeal if they are not happy with the outcome of the investigation.
- 4 Where it is not possible to complete the investigation and reach a conclusion within the timescale the Chief Executive will write to the complainant advising him/her of the reason for the delay. The outcome of the investigation will then be sent to the complainant within 5 days of the investigation being complete.

### **Right of Appeal**

1. If a complainant is not happy with the response they receive following an investigation they have 10 working days to apply in writing to the Chief Executive or Chairman to request for the complaint to be reinvestigated. This request should include the reasons why they are not happy with the outcome.
2. This request will receive a written acknowledgement within 2 working days.
3. The Chief Executive or Chairman will look at the original investigation and the reasons why the complainant is not happy with the outcome. They will then carry out any further investigation that is required.
4. The complainant will receive a written response outlining the outcome within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal being received.
5. Where it is not possible to complete the investigation and reach a conclusion within the timescale the Chief Executive will write to the complainant advising

him/her of the reason for the delay. The outcome of the investigation will then be sent to the complainant within 5 days of the investigation being complete.

6. Where a complaint is related to the care received by a child or their family, if the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint following the decision of the Chairman or Chief Executive you may have a further option. If you live in Dorset as part of our service is funded by Dorset Integrated Care Service you can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk). This organisation is independent and makes the final decision on unresolved complaints about NHS England.

### **Complaints Recording**

1. Details of the complaints will be held where appropriate in relation to the complaint e.g. personnel files, care notes.
2. All clinical complaints are reported to the quarterly Clinical Governance Group. All HR complaints are reported to the Board via the regular HR report.

### **Contact Addresses**

**Chairman: Brian Parker**

**Responsible Individual: Claire Hudson-Cooper**

**Registered Manager: Chief Executive Martin Edwards**

**Director of Care: Claire Hudson-Cooper**

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