

Dementia Concern

Complaints Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Complaints Policy can be an effective tool in evaluating quality, and is a useful part of consulting with and providing a service to people with dementia and their carers. It is important that we listen to people's suggestions and comments. The best possible way of doing this is to put a simple process in place for people who wish to make a complaint or comment on our services.

1.2 There is a fine line between suggestions for improvements and actual complaints. Dementia Concern endeavours to take a positive approach to comments suggesting improvements. The person receiving the suggestions will discuss them with their line manager or the Chief Executive as appropriate.

1.3 If a person with dementia or a carer makes a complaint, which is found not to be justified, they will not be penalised in any way. They will continue to have access to Dementia Concern services if they wish.

2.0 Procedure If a Concern Is Expressed

2.1 Staff and volunteers should report any concerns about a service expressed to them by people with dementia or carers to their line manager or the Chief Executive as appropriate.

2.2 The Chief Executive will log this on a central register and this will form part of an overall review of services each year. Everyone involved should be consulted and have the opportunity to give information about the concern to senior managers or the Chief Executive.

2.3 In these circumstances, the line manager should discuss the issue with the Chief Executive who may request that the concern is resolved informally.

3.0 Procedure for Reporting a Formal Complaint

3.1 Within seven days of a formal complaint being made (verbal or written), the Chief Executive will contact the complainant. If no written complaint has been received, the Chief Executive will ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing. If the complainant is unwilling to do this but wants to continue with the complaint, the Chief Executive will produce a summary of the complaint and the procedure will still continue as below.

3.2 The Chief Executive will either investigate the complaint or appoint a designated person to investigate. Where the subject of the complaint is a member of senior management, the Chief Executive or next most senior manager will investigate.

The Chief Executive will send out standard letter one which will:

- Briefly outline the procedure and time span.
- Confirm that the outcome will be reported to the complainant.
- Check whether the complainant requires support in the process, such as language, literacy or visual assistance.
- Identify the person investigating the complaint if it is not the Chief Executive. This will also include a copy of this Complaints Procedure.

3.3 The investigating officer may contact staff (if appropriate) to inform them they will be receiving a letter regarding attending an interview (standard letter two).

The investigating officer will conduct interviews using open and not leading questions. They will also consider whether a witness might be needed during the interview.(standard letter two).

Staff who are interviewed during the course of an investigation will be offered the opportunity of being accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

3.4 The investigation will be completed within 28 days from the date of standard letter one and if possible sooner. The investigating officer, if not the Chief Executive, will report to the Chief Executive who will send a written reply (standard letter three) to the complainant. This letter will comprehensively explain the investigation and outlining any action to be taken, where it is appropriate for the complainant to know the details.

3.5 The person complained about will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and be offered the opportunity of further discussion with the Chief Executive or senior manager involved (standard letter four).

3.6 If the complainant is not satisfied at the end of the process or not satisfied with the response of the Chief Executive, they have the right to appeal to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If the complaint is regarding the Chair of Trustees, then please appeal to the Vice Chair of trustees.

3.7 If your complaint is related to the Chief Executive, then the HR Manager will assume the Chief Executive's role in the complaint process.

4. Recording & Monitoring Complaints

4.1 All complaints must be logged on Charitylog as soon as possible and serious complaints must be reported to the CEO immediately.

4.2 General complaints must be raised with the relevant line manager and reported to the Director of Services on a monthly basis.

4.3 Complaints will be raised at the board meetings, which are currently held six times a year. The board will then hear how each complaint has been resolved or moved forwards, and decide on any actions that Dementia Concern staff need to make.

Dementia Concern Guidelines for Investigating Officers for Complaints

1. Please refer to the Complaints Policy when dealing with a complaint.
2. The person receiving the complaint first should pass it to the Chief Executive on the day it is received.
3. The Chief Executive will write to acknowledge the complaint within five working days of receipt of the complaint (standard letter one will be used).
4. The Chief Executive will then initiate an investigation or appoint an investigating officer.
5. Issues relating to confidentiality should be considered at all times and emphasised to all involved.
6. Interviews with the complainant, the paid and unpaid staff, if appropriate, should be set up as soon as possible (standard letter two should be used and completed appropriately).
7. Detailed notes of interviews should be taken by you and be copied to the interviewer at the end of the interview. Where appropriate (for example if there are legal implications involved in the complaint) interviews should be minuted by a member of the Administration Team.
8. Interviews should be conducted using open and not leading questions.
9. Depending on the nature of the complaint you should consider whether a witness should be present during the interview. Where legal action or an insurance claim is possible, the Chief Executive should be consulted. Consideration should also be given to the location of the interviews.
10. On receiving all the relevant information, you should compile a report (including copies of all written details pertaining to the case) for submission to the Chief Executive if they are not the investigating officer.
11. The Chief Executive will communicate the findings of the report to the complainant together with an outline of any action to be taken (standard letter three).
12. The Chief Executive will also notify the outcome of the investigation to the person complained about (standard letter four).
13. The written details pertaining to the case will be centrally and confidentially filed by the Chief Executive who is responsible for monitoring the number and types of complaints.

Appendix One

Standard Letter One

To the complainant

Date

Private and confidential

Name

Address

Dear (name of the complainant)

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter (date). I am sorry that you have found it necessary to complain about the services offered by Dementia Concern.

As part of our commitment to equal opportunities and empowering people with dementia and their carers, we have a published Complaints Procedure, details of which are attached for your information.

(Name and title) is the designated officer who will investigate the issues you have raised. They will contact you to clarify any issues and/or set up an interview as necessary.

Please let your designated officer know if you require any help or support in the process. The type of help we can provide includes translation, literacy or visual assistance, a cassette version of the Complaints Procedure, and transport to and from any meeting pertaining to the complaint and respite.

The investigation process will be as follows:

1. (Name of investigating officer) may contact you to clarify the details of your complaint.
2. (Name of investigating officer) will then consult and interview all the people involved in the complaint.
3. I will write to you (within 28 days of this letter) giving the result of the investigation and outlining action to be taken.
4. Any appropriate action will be taken.
5. If you are not happy with the outcome of the investigation, you may appeal to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If your complaint is regarding the Chair of Trustees, then address your appeal to the Vice Chair of Trustees.

Only people relevant to the investigation will know of the details of your complaint. If you have any queries at any stage please contact (name of investigating officer) on 020 8568 4448.

Yours sincerely

Name

Title

Appendix Two

Standard Letter Two

To staff member(s)

Date

Private and Confidential

Name

Address

Dear (name of recipient)

I am in the process of following up on a complaint received from (name) or (date).

I would like to advise you that this matter is of a confidential nature and should not be discussed inappropriately.

The details of the complaint are as follows: (Give outline of the complaint as appropriate)

In order to inform my investigation, I would like to arrange an interview with you. I would therefore be grateful if you could contact me on 020 8568 4448 as soon as possible to arrange a mutually convenient date and time.

You are welcome to attend the meeting with a friend, colleague or trade union representative if you choose. To maintain confidentiality, you are asked to restrict your discussion of this to your advocate (and/or your line manager – if not the investigating officer).

Yours sincerely

Name

Title

Appendix Three

Standard Letter Three

To the complainant

Date

Private and Confidential

Name

Address

Dear (name of recipient)

I am now in receipt of the report from (name of the investigating officer) following your complaint of (date).

The outcome of the investigation is

As a result of these findings I will be taking the following action

If you are not satisfied, you have the right to appeal to your line manager, the Director of Services or the CEO.

Your appeal should be made in writing, giving details of the nature of your dissatisfaction.

Yours sincerely

Name

Title

Appendix Four

Standard Letter Four

To staff member(s)

Date

Private and Confidential

Name

Address

Dear (name of recipient)

I am now in receipt of the report from (name of the investigating officer) following the complaint of (date).

The outcome of the investigation is

If you would like to discuss this with me, please contact me on 020 8568 4448 to arrange a convenient time and place to meet.

Yours sincerely

Name

Title

Dementia Concern Format for Investigating Complaints

1. The date by which the investigation ought to be completed by (should be within 28 working days of start date):
2. Name of person making the complaint:
3. Name of person investigating complaint:
4. The complaint:
5. Action to be taken to investigate the complaint:
6. Conclusions and recommendations following investigation:
7. What should be done to ensure this does not happen again:
8. Extension date for completion of investigation (if applicable):
9. Reason for extension (if applicable):