



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Caremore Group

Supporting and accommodating looked after young people

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INTRODUCTION

This policy defines Caremore Group’s complaints procedure for service users, former service users, other organisations or members of the public who wish to make a complaint to Caremore Group. This policy does not define the procedure for staff to make a complaint; this can be found in the Grievance policy.

AIM OF THIS POLICY

Caremore Group aim to ensure that its complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented, and that service users feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

Caremore Group believe that if a service user wishes to make a complaint or register a concern, they should find it easy to do so. It is each establishment’s policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints by service users and their relatives are taken seriously.

This policy can be used by someone affected by something a Caremore Group service user or staff member does or fails to do.

A representative of a service user can make a complaint instead or where the service user is unable to represent themselves.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

When a service user, former service user, an organisation or a member of the public wishes to make a complaint about the Caremore Group service, the following procedure should be followed:

The complainant can make a complaint verbally to a member of staff at their service, or in writing. Caremore Group will treat the complaint seriously however it is received.

VERBAL COMPLAINTS

- All oral complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, should be taken seriously. There is nothing to be gained by staff adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- Front line staff who receive an oral complaint should seek to solve the problem immediately if possible.
- If staff cannot solve the problem immediately, they should offer to get the manager to deal with the problem if possible.
- All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous and sympathetic.
- At all times staff should remain calm and respectful.
- Staff should not accept blame, make excuses or blame other staff.
- If the complaint is being made on behalf of the service user by an advocate it must first be verified that the person has permission to speak for the service user, especially if confidential information is involved. It is very easy to assume that the advocate has the right or power to act for the service user when they may not. If in doubt it should be assumed that the service user's explicit permission is needed prior to discussing the complaint with the advocate.
- After talking the problem through, each manager or the member of staff dealing with the complaint should suggest a course of action to resolve the complaint. If this course of action is acceptable then the member of staff should clarify the agreement with the complainant and agree a way in which the results of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant (i.e. through another meeting or by letter).
- If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant, then the member of staff or manager should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing to the establishment and give them a copy of the complaints procedure and form for completion.
- In both cases details of the complaints should be recorded on a complaints form and handed to the Manager.

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS

- When a complaint is received in writing it should be passed on to management who should make a record of the complaint and send an acknowledgment letter within two working days.
- If necessary, further details should be obtained from the complainant. If the complaint is not made by the service user but on the service user's behalf, then consent of the service user, preferably in writing, must be obtained from the complainant.
- If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a legal advisor to the establishment. If legal action is taken at this stage any investigation by Caremore Group under the complaint's procedure should cease immediately.
- If the complainant is not prepared to have the investigation conducted by Caremore Group, he or she should be advised to contact the Local Authority and be given the contact details.
- Immediately on receipt of the complaint Caremore Group should launch an investigation and within 28 days should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.
- If the issues are too complex to complete the investigation within 28 days, the complainant should be informed of any delays.
- If a meeting is arranged the complainant should be advised that they may, if they wish, bring a friend or relative or a representative such as an advocate.
- At the meeting a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation should be given and an apology if it is deemed appropriate (apologising for what has happened need not be an admission of liability).
- Such a meeting gives Caremore Group the opportunity to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.
- Any shortcomings in Caremore Group's procedures should be identified and acted upon.
- If a service user is not satisfied with the outcome, as a result of an appeal they have the right to take the complaint to the local authority that commissions that service.
- If the local authority does not resolve the complaint the service user can take the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

RECORDS OF COMPLAINTS

Caremore Group should keep a copy of all complaints on file. It is the managers to keep a record of complaints.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy, discuss complaints and their outcome at a formal business meeting and the establishment's complaints procedure should be reviewed annually.