

## **Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service**

### **Policy: Complaints, Concerns and Negative Feedback**

#### Introduction

Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service aims to be a safe and welcoming place for people who need to use it and the staff and volunteers who work here.

There may be times when a visitor or caller, or someone from outside the organisation, wishes to complain. There may also be times when somebody wishes to give us critical or negative feedback, or to raise concerns verbally, without making a formal complaint.

We aim to respond positively to all feedback, comments, criticisms and complaints and see this as a valuable process for improving what we do and becoming more sensitive to the needs of our visitors and callers. We welcome the involvement of advocates for visitors or callers who wish to complain.

#### Resolving Complaints

As a survivor led organisation, listening to our visitors and callers is central to our way of working. Whenever possible and appropriate, we will try to resolve difficulties as soon and as straightforwardly as possible within the organisation.

We will respond to complaints, criticisms and negative feedback in whatever way we receive them and in the way that the complainant wishes us to respond. Some visitors, callers, carers or professionals may wish to make a formal complaint. However, we recognise that for somebody who is vulnerable and in crisis, this may seem an intimidating process and they may wish to make an informal, verbal complaint, or simply give some critical feedback about the service. All complaints and criticisms will be recorded (see attached) and action taken as appropriate.

It will help us to respond to complaints and criticisms swiftly, if people bring to our attention the nature of their complaint and the time that the problem occurs. However, we recognise that, particularly when people are in crisis and in unfamiliar surroundings, they may reflect on a situation later and then realise that they feel let down or aggrieved. In this case, they could still make an informal, or formal, complaint.

## Making a Formal Complaint

Formal complaints can be made in writing, by telephone, or in person to the CEO, Operational Director, or any of the other managers. If the complaint is about the CEO it should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Once a complaint has been received, it will be dealt with during a period of 15 working days. If this needs to be extended, in order to thoroughly investigate the matter, then the person making the complaint will be kept informed of progress on a weekly basis. The outcome of any investigation will be recorded and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.

If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome, they can appeal. Again, the appeal can be made verbally or in writing. The appeal would go to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If the Chair has already responded, the appeal would be heard by two other committee members. The appeal will be dealt with in 15 working days. As above, the complainant will be informed if this needs to be extended. The outcome of the appeal will be recorded and the complainant informed of the outcome.

## Complaints about specific workers

Complaints may be about the service or about individual workers (paid or voluntary). A visitor who has made a complaint about specific workers will still be able to use the service, but will not work with workers that they have complained about until the situation is resolved. The resolution may be after the formal complaints procedure has been gone through, or the complainant may have agreed another mechanism for resolving the situation (i.e. to meet with the worker who the complaint is about to discuss the issues).

Wherever possible, and where this is appropriate, we will encourage the visitor to discuss their complaint directly with the worker. This would not be appropriate if the complaint was of a serious nature, or would constitute misconduct were the complaint upheld. But where a visitor is unhappy with their request for a visit being declined, for example, or an interaction with a worker, this may be the best course of action.

We recognise that if a worker has been complained about, this can be distressing and the investigatory process may be stressful. The organisation endeavours to support staff throughout the process.

## Monitoring Complaints

All complaints will be brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees. Complaints will be anonymised so that complainants are not identified.

The Board will monitor the nature and number of complaints, in order to support the management team to identify improvements that need to be made within the service.

This policy is not intended to be exhaustive or to prescribe the course of action which is to be used in every situation. There may be times when the Board of Trustees choose to take a different approach. For example, if a visitor or caller is making persistent complaints, which are seen as vexatious, or if complaints made are symptomatic of a deterioration in someone's mental health. In these instances, the management team will adopt a course of action in consultation with the team, where appropriate. This would also be discussed in the CEO's supervision with the Chair. In all situations, visitors and callers will be treated with compassion and respect and their complaint will be responded to.

**Last ratified July 2017. Next Review July 2020**

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**Record of Complaints, Concerns and Criticisms.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Complainant</b>	<b>Nature of Complaint</b>	<b>Status of Complaint (i.e. formal complaint, verbal feedback)</b>	<b>Action Taken (with dates)</b>	<b>Outcome of Complaint</b>

