

Complaints Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Choice Care Group believes that if anyone wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. It is our 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 or comments by service users, their relatives, staff, visitors, neighbours and members of the public are taken seriously.

The policy is not designed to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to provide compensation. It is not part of the organisation's disciplinary policy.

We believe that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints, will lead to an aggravation of problems, service user dissatisfaction and possible litigation.

The organisation supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted out at a local level between just the complainant and the service. If this fails, due to the complainant being dissatisfied with the result, the complaint will be referred to the senior management team within Choice Care Group, who will assign someone senior to investigate.

Choice Care Group adheres fully to the relevant guidance and legislation which relates to the degree to which service users feel their complaints and views are listened to and acted on.

DEFINITION OF COMPLAINT

A complaint is a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.

AIM

The aim of each service within Choice Care Group is to ensure that its complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented and that all persons making a complaint feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

GOALS

The goal of all Choice Care Group services is to ensure that:

- Service users and their representatives and all other persons wishing to make a complaint are aware of how to complain and that the service provides easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints.
- The manager will be responsible for the administration of the procedure.

- Every written complaint is acknowledged within 5 working days.
- Investigations into written complaints are held within 28 days.
- All complaints are responded to in writing by the service or manager looking into the complaint.
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to both staff and service users and their relatives.
- When complainants do not wish to identify themselves, the complaints process will be followed as far as is possible.
- We undertake a review to establish the level of investigation and immediate action required.
- We make sure appropriate investigations are carried out to identify what might have caused the complaint and actions are taken to prevent similar complaints.

People have the right to inform the Care Quality Commission about a complaint they have made to or about Choice Care Group, although the Care Quality Commission do not have powers to investigate or resolve complaints, except for people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.

CONTACT DETAILS TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

- Home Manager / Service Manager – individual contact details held within each service.
- Assistant Regional Director or Regional Director – name and contact details held within each service, or on the company's intranet, alternatively contact Choice Head Office for the name and contact details on 01344 868 890.
- Individuals within Choice can be emailed via firstname.surname@choicecaregroup.com
- The senior manager for a service can also be written to at the Head Office address shown on the footer of this policy.
- Local host authority – contact details are displayed / kept within each service with the safeguarding reporting procedure. These are also available searching online for the local authority – safeguarding – adult social care.
- Care Quality Commission:
 Telephone: 03000 616161 (general enquiries) -Monday to Friday. 8.30am to 5.30pm
 Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk
 Address: CQC National Customer Service Centre, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA.
- For individuals we support who are either self-funding or have an individual budget, they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman:-
 Telephone: 0300 0610614
 Email: advice@lgo.org.uk
 Address: Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 OEH.

If all other measures have been taken and a complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may take this up with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).

People are also entitled to call the Citizens Advice Bureau for advice should they not know what action to take.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Verbal Complaints

- All verbal complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, should be taken seriously. There is nothing to be gained by staff adopting a defensive attitude.
- Front line care staff who receive a verbal complaint should seek to solve the problem immediately if possible.
- If staff cannot solve the problem immediately they should offer to ask the manager to deal with the problem.
- All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous and sympathetic. The complaint must be recorded on a complaints recording form, and also on the complaints log.
- At all times staff should remain calm and respectful.
- Staff should not accept blame, make excuses or blame other staff.
- After talking the problem through, the 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 service and give them a copy of the complaints procedure.
- In both cases, details of the complaints should be recorded on a complaints form and complaints log.

Written Complaints

- When a complaint is received in writing it should be passed on to the named manager who will record it on the complaints form and complaints log and send an acknowledgment letter or email within five working days. The manager will be the named person who deals with the complaint through the process.
- Details of the organisation's complaints procedure should be made available to the complainant.
- If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from an Assistant/Regional Director for the service or another member of the Senior Management Team.

- If the complainant is not comfortable with the investigation being conducted by the Manager, he or she should be advised to contact the Choice Care Group Senior Management Team and be given the relevant contact details.
- Immediately upon receipt of the complaint the service should launch an investigation and within 28 days the service 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 a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation should be given and also an apology if it is deemed appropriate.
- Such a meeting gives the service the opportunity to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.
- After the meeting, or if the complainant does not want a meeting, a written account of the outcome of the investigation should be sent to the complainant.
- The outcomes of the investigation and the meeting should be recorded on the complaints form and any shortcomings in the services procedures should be identified and acted upon.

DUTY OF CANDOUR

Complaints are dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Duty of Candour Policy, including openness, where people should be able to raise complaints freely without fear, transparently, where the outcomes are shared with people, and candour, where any service user harmed by the provision of a healthcare service is informed of the fact and an appropriate remedy offered, regardless of whether a complaint has been made or a question asked about it.

Where a duty of candour applies we ensure we offer an apology, follow up the apology by giving the same information in writing, and providing an update on any further enquiries. A record is to be kept of all communications with relevant people.

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE POLICY

All staff will read the Complaints Procedure and in-house training conducted to provide updates. It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure the complaints policy is accessible to service users within the service, keeping in mind their ability and level of communication.

DATA PROTECTION

Choice Care Group will ensure data collected during complaints will be handled, processed and stored in line with our Data Protection Policy.

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| Policy Revision Number / Date | V3 - 01/04/21 |
| This policy was created / last updated by | Martin Prescott |
| This policy is the responsibility of | Director of Quality /Regional Directors and above |
| Next review due | 01/04/24 |

