



ALL OUT

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Author(s)	Graham England
Individual responsible for policy	Graham England
Original Policy Date	November 2013
Version	
Issue date (Current version)	November 2013
Review date	November 2016

Introduction

ALL OUT is committed to providing an excellent service and to ensure that professional standards of service provision are adhered to. We continually strive to improve our services through training, policy and service reviews with the aim of developing best practice.

We believe that service user satisfaction and feedback are key to delivery of excellent services. However there are times when people feel a valid complaint needs to be made and it is our intent to hear feedback or criticism, whether it is an offer for improvement or a case where there is a grievance. In all circumstances ALL OUT will endeavour to respond to the person complaining in an honest, open and fair manner.

We treat all complaints and other feedback seriously. Where our services fall short of our high standards and what you expect, we will investigate and put it right. We will learn from complaints and use this learning to improve our services for the future.

ALL OUT will ensure that we never treat any service user who makes a complaint in a negative or adverse way, because of making a complaint.

ALL OUT welcomes complaints and see them as a useful way to help improve what we do.

Purpose of our complaints policy

ALL OUT views complaints as a significant source of learning and provide us with opportunities to improve:

- outcomes for service users
- the quality of services
- the service user experience
- This policy and procedure will enable us to:
- Respond to complaints fairly and objectively
- Reflect our aim of providing an excellent service
- Empower staff through training to view complaints in a positive way
- Use feedback from service users, stakeholders and any other person making a complaint to improve services and business planning
- Respond to complaints appropriately taking into account the needs of the person making the complaint, whether they are a service user, stakeholder or member of the public

What is a complaint?

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction by a service user, stakeholder or member of the public, about our service, or action that we have or have not taken.

A **request for action** is not a complaint and will be dealt with by the relevant staff member. An example of this may be a request for a repair to a property, or a report from a neighbour about Anti Social Behaviour.

An **enquiry is** when we are contacted for information, for example a request by a service user for a balance on their rent account. Or another agency wanting to refer a potential service user.

An 'informal concern' and a 'formal complaint', for the purposes of this policy may both be defined as 'any expression of discontent that requires a response'. There are however some

differences in the manner in which 'informal concerns' and 'formal complaints' are managed, these are outlined within this policy.

How we will deal with a complaint

The information about Informal Concerns and Formal Complaints, and about all the people involved, is strictly confidential. Any information is only disclosed to those with a demonstrable need to know in line with the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

Informal concerns

If a service user has a concern or complaint we would encourage an initial discussion with their Counsellor. If a service user was unwilling or unable to do this, perhaps because the complaint is against the Counsellor, they should ask for a meeting with the Head of Service.

The aim of this informal discussion with the Counsellor would be to see if we could solve the problem quickly, simply and fairly. It is hoped that the great majority of issues can be settled to the satisfaction of the person raising the concern /complaint at this initial stage

The raising of Informal Concerns and other feedback including constructive criticism, made through client surveys or in discussion with staff, is always welcome as help towards raising service standards

Formal complaints

If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily by the counsellor, the client will be advised to formalise the complaint, by detailing the problems and issues they are facing in writing, for the attention of either the Head of Service.

All complaints and subsequent reviews will be recorded in writing. Each separate review or appeal as it progresses will be carried out by a new senior member of staff to ensure that at each stage there is a new unbiased view on the detail and process.

At the start of any complaint staff will ensure that any specific needs or preferences of those making a complaint are identified, for example in relation:

- disability and any adjustments required
- gender of the investigating manager
- providing information in appropriate formats.

What happens next?

The Head of Service is responsible for making sure we deal with the complaint and will acknowledge it within 5 working days of receipt.

The Head of Service or another person they ask, will look into the complaint. A full written response will be made by the Head of Service within a further 15 working days, informing of the outcome of the complaint and any action ALL OUT may be taking.

If the person making the complaint is still not satisfied, we will advise them of any relevant bodies which can independently hear the complaint, for example the GamCare Partners Manager the funder of the service.

Making a complaint if you are an external stakeholder or other interested party

If you have a complaint you should contact the Head of Service by phone or formally in writing. ALL OUT will deal with any complaint within the same timescales and processes listed above.

When we cannot deal with a complaint.

ALL OUT are dedicated to ensure that everyone who comes into contact with our organisation and services are fully satisfied with their experience. However there are some situations that are beyond our control and where the complaints procedure may not be able to provide a resolution.

Examples may include:

- Persons or bodies over which we have no control
- The general law, e.g. appeals against court rulings such as possession orders
- Against a refusal to allocate a service where a person is not eligible

Where this is the case and there is another organisation involved, we will pass the complaint to the relevant organisation and inform the person making the complaint of our action.

Service user Care and Access

We will make sure that our complaints policy and procedure are easy to access and well publicised.

We will do all we can to use the feedback received, to learn and make changes to improve our services.

Equality and Diversity

We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently.

We will ensure that we never treat any service user who makes a complaint in a negative or adverse way, because of making a complaint.

We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people in accordance with our equality and diversity policy.

We will monitor who is using this policy and compare this to the current community of our service users so that we can further improve our services.

Any monitoring information will be used to improve our services to and ensure that all of our service users can access our complaints policy and procedure. This information will in no way be used to influence individual complaints.

We will act sensitively towards needs of service users and the community.

We will take positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

A Complaints Log will be maintained and include the date and time of complaint, name and address of service user; name and address of complainant (if different), nature of the complaint, action taken, and the date action was taken and remedy completed.

Flowchart of Formal Complaint Journey

ALL OUT invites feedback about all our services and takes complaints seriously.
This flowchart identifies the stages of the complaints process.
The full policy is available on request please ask a member of staff

