

COMPLAINTS POLICY

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Distribution	All <i>Off the Record B&NES</i> line managers and admin staff
Author	Revised – Jo Grant, Director
Implementation Plan	Cascade by managers

Revision	Date	Revision Description
1.0	May 2008	Policy written by David Jones (Director).
2.0	September 2009	Amended Policy
3.0	May 2013	Policy updated – Jo Grant (Director)
4.0	February 2016	Lynda Williams - Director

Appendices

Appendix 1	Comment / Complaint Form

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Introduction

Off the Record (OTR) recognises the right of service users, commissioners/funders, partners and other stakeholders to comment and/or complain about the organisation's services and indeed views comments/complaints as a valuable form of feedback about their services.

OTR undertakes regular monitoring to evaluate all of its services and is committed to ensuring that service users are well informed enabling them to make comments and complaints when required.

As a progressive, young person centred organisation we welcome both comments and complaints and want to hear from all service users, commissioners/funders, partners and other stakeholders.

We want to encourage, listen to and where possible include the views of service users in our practice and services.

'When Off the Record receives a complaint, particularly it will be resolved quickly and efficiently wherever possible.'

2. Terminology

It is important that we define the difference between a 'comment' and a 'complaint':-

3. What is a 'Comment'?

When a service user, commissioner/funder, partner or other stakeholder makes a comment - for example offering an idea on how we can improve the delivery of the service - but does not want to make a complaint.

4. What is a 'Complaint'?

It is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not. For example a complaint could be about:-

- Our service standards or quality.
- Our staff's professional conduct.
- Young people being able to access our services.
- Our policies.
- Any form of discrimination.

A complaint could include one or more of the following problems:

- We provide a poor quality service or make a mistake.
- An employee's behaviour causes upset.
- We delay in providing a service.
- We fail to provide a service.
- We unfairly discriminate against a service user.

5. Ways to Complain

If a service user, commissioner/funder, partner or other stakeholder wishes to complain, it should first be established whether the situation can be resolved informally. The staff member/volunteer at the point of service delivery should do this if possible but never with the intention of preventing a genuine complaint. If this is not possible and the complainant still wishes to proceed with their complaint they can do this by: -

- informing a member of staff verbally who will immediately record the details,
- telephoning one of our sites,
- writing via a letter or an email.
- completing an OTR complaint form, which are located at the three OTR sites (Bath, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton) or can be downloaded from the website (see Appendix 1).

6. How will OTR deal with a Complaint?

Stage 1 – Primary Resolution

OTR will aim to deal with all complaints at the point of service delivery.

When a complaint is received by a member of staff they will:

- Immediately record all the information regarding the complainant or their representative's issues of concern and notify their manager
- An assessment will be made by the manager. They will determine whether the issues being highlighted can be dealt with within 24 hours if not straight away.
Note: If the initial complaint specifically requests that the Director deal with the complaint then this will be honoured
- If the issue cannot be resolved straight away or within 24 hours the complaint will pass to Stage 2 'Senior Manager Resolution'.
Note: The Director should be informed of any complaint dealt with at this stage and action taken and the complaint and action taken should be recorded in the central record.

Stage 2 – Senior Manager Resolution

If the complaint is not resolved at Primary Resolution Stage the Director will become involved.

- The Director will contact the complainant within 5 working days and provide the individual with a date when they should receive feedback from OTR on the result of their investigation.
- The Director will aim to resolve the issue within 10 working days.

Stage 3 – Board of Trustees

If the individual making the complaint is not satisfied with the response they receive at Stage 2 they can ask the complaint to be considered by the Board of Trustees

A panel comprising three members of OTR's Board of Trustees will be designated to investigate at this stage, one of whom will chair the proceedings.

The Board of Trustees representatives will aim to: -

- Send an acknowledgement to the complainant within 2 working days. This will include the contact details of the person who is chairing the panel of representatives from the Board of Trustees.
- Respond to the complaint within 10 days. However, this may take longer if the Board of Trustees panel needs to be convened.

7. Record of Complaints

Complaints will be stored for two years and each complaint will be reviewed after twelve months. OTR will use this information to improve its services to young people and the wider community.

8. Data Protection Act 1998

OTR has to comply with this Act. This means that the member of staff or Board of Management dealing with the complaint must inform the complainant that under the Data Protection Act their information will only be accessed by those who need it in order to comprehensively respond to their comment or complaint. The complainant must further be informed that their information may also have to be shared with other members of staff and volunteers within OTR.

Appendix 1

YOUR COMMENT OR COMPLAINT

Off the Record recognises the right of young people and other members of the community to complain or comment about the organisation's services and indeed views complaints as a valuable form of feedback about our services. You may find it helpful to refer to our "Complaints Policy" – for a copy please contact us.

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Daytime Phone Number	
Evening Phone Number	

Which Off the Record Service is your Comment or Complaint about?	
What happened / did not happen? (Please include date(s) and place(s) if appropriate.)	

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please give this form to a member of staff. Alternatively, it can be posted to:

The Director, Off the Record, Open House Centre, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JW.