

Forest of Hearts Complaints Policy

Document Description

Forest of Hearts aims to provide high quality services and to be responsive to the wants and needs of service users.

However, things do go wrong sometimes and this policy sets out complaints procedure and what service users and their families can expect to happen.

Implementation & Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this Policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.

The Policy will be reviewed every year by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

All aspects of this Policy shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy please contact Carole.longden@longden.co.uk or 07774 424404

Complaints Policy

Introduction

Forest of Hearts aims to provide high quality services and to be responsive to the wants and needs of service users.

Service users, their families, carers and advocates and those who have requested or been referred for a service have the right to raise concerns, objections or make complaints about the services and responses they receive from the Charity. All concerns and complaints from service users or others will be taken seriously, listened to carefully, investigated fully where necessary, and responded to with respect and courtesy.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- enable service users to comment on weaknesses and to let the Charity know about things that have gone wrong or cause concern
- improve the quality of services by taking notice of the views of people affected by the services, building on what is good and changing what needs improving
- ensure that the Charity takes users' views seriously and will follow up any problems that they bring forward

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- protect the interests of individual clients
- enable users, potential users and carers to challenge decisions
- protect staff and enable them to deal with complaints consistently.

A complaint shall mean, a written or oral expression of dissatisfaction or concern relating to the everyday operations of the services and activities provided by Forest of Hearts. This dissatisfaction could include the actions of the Charity's personnel, their failure to act, or delay in taking action, which requires the Charity to account for its conduct.

The Complaints Procedure

There are three distinct stages to the procedure:

Step 1 – The Informal Approach

Step 2 – The Formal Approach

Step 3 – The Review Committee.

1. In the first instance, some concerns or complaints will, by their nature, be easy to resolve immediately, to everyone's satisfaction. The complaint or concern should be raised with the member of staff or volunteer providing the service or the manager of the service concerned. Most issues will usually be resolved in this way.
2. If the complaint is unresolved it should be put in writing (assistance can be arranged if required) and sent to the Founder of the Forest of Hearts. An acknowledgement will be made in writing, an investigation undertaken and in most circumstances a response will be formally made within 10 working days of receipt.
3. If the complaint is still unresolved an appeal can be made in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Forest of Hearts at the Charity's offices. A Complaints Sub-committee will be formed within 10 working days comprising two trustees of the Charity.
4. The Committee will consider the complaint and may ask the service user, carer or advocate to meet with them. The complainant may request a personal hearing with the Committee and has the right to be supported or represented by a person of their choice.
5. The Committee will then seek the views and investigate the actions of the officers of the Charity and seek to obtain any other relevant information. The Complaints Committee will endeavour to reach its decision within 10 working days and notify parties accordingly. Where this proves impracticable, due to the complexity of the case or external factors such as a wait for a key piece of information, the Committee will issue an interim or final report within one calendar month.

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6. Should the complainant or other interested party be dissatisfied with the decision of the Trustees, they can request an appeal. Such an appeal must be based either on the grounds that the procedure followed by the Trustees was incorrect, or, because new information has come to light. Should this be the case the complainant may be represented by a person of her or his own choosing. A new Complaints Sub-committee will be convened to consider any further representations within 10 working days of such a request. The decision of the Complaints Committee will then be final and the process concluded.

This procedure does not cover matters of law or where a police investigation may be involved. Complaints relating to our trading/insurance activities will be dealt with under Age UK Enterprises' Complaints Procedure.

Those making a complaint or raising a concern will be given a copy of the Complaints Policy and offered assistance in understanding, interpreting or translating its effective use.

Formal complaints i.e. those for which a written reply is required (see paragraph 2 of the procedure), will be recorded and monitored. The Board of Trustees will receive a report of all complaints at least annually.

Monitoring of Complaints Policy

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis. This policy was adopted at the Meeting of FOREST OF HEARTS' Directors held on 12th October 2022 and will be reviewed in 2024.