



Complaints Policy

ACE Ltd



Ratification

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ACE Ltd



Introduction

ACE believe that feedback, both positive and negative, is essential in helping us improve our services and celebrate our successes.

The purpose of this procedure is to provide instruction to members of staff at Azalea Care and Education (ACE) in relation to addressing complaints or concerns raised and of the right to complain to regulatory bodies as well as sharing compliments to highlight and celebrate our good practice.

This policy will be given to parents/carers before an individual receives any care from the organisation. All staff members will be given the policy on induction and will be asked to sign that they have read it on an annual basis.

Many of our service users have cognitive and/or communications difficulties and every possible adjustment is to be made in order to ensure that they feel able to make a complaint if needed.

Complaints

At ACE, we firmly believe that if members of staff, service users or carers, family and representatives wish to make a complaint, they should find it easy and be supported to do so.

COMPLAINT: Our definition of a complaint is 'an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to ACE or a member of its staff that requires a response from the organisation.'

While the focus of 'the Code' relates to candour in the context of "when things go wrong", openness and honesty are recognised as important values in the undertaking of all operational duties at Azalea Care and Education.

Things can go wrong even when services are well run and managed. Consequences can range from minor inconvenience to serious (or long-term) implications for an individual's life.

To enhance our performance as an organisation, we would like to emphasise that all staff members at ACE are welcome to communicate and share good practice ideas and opportunities for improvement with us, so that we can continue to champion choice and independence for the people we serve, and value our workforce in the right way for years to come.

What we do to support individuals

As a registered provider of social care, ACE has a duty to support and encourage the workforce:

- To report and record adverse incidents.
- To adopt the principles of "openness, transparency and honesty".
- To participate in investigations and reviews, as required.
- To discuss and agree actions with relevant stakeholders.
- To apologise to individuals and keep individuals informed.



- To be confident in raising concerns.
- To consider the implications of dissuading colleagues from raising concerns.

As a social care professional, you are expected to be open and honest with individuals when things go wrong – this means that you:

- Must inform the individual (or where appropriate the individual's carer, family or representative) when something has gone wrong.
- Must apologise to the individual (or where appropriate the individual's carer, family or representative) when something has gone wrong.
- Must explain to the individual (or where appropriate the individual's carer, family, or representative) the consequences of what has happened.
- Must remind the individual (or where appropriate the individual's carer, family, or representative) of rights to complain internally and to regulatory bodies.
- Must involve the individual (or where appropriate the individual's carer, family, or representative) in decision-making processes to resolve matters satisfactorily, where possible.
- Must report adverse incidents and participate in investigations and reviews, as required.

The Staff Discipline Policy outlines the process for dealing with complaints.

Informal Complaints

Informal complaints are normally:

1. A verbal complaint raised with a staff member.
2. Those that can be addressed and resolved immediately.
3. Those that do not require investigation.
4. Those that do not require a formal written response.

Whilst most informal complaints will be made verbally, it does not follow that all verbal complaints raised are not formal complaints. Informal complaints may also be written; however, the main defining features are as 2, 3, and 4 above.

How to deal with an Informal complaint

A person dealing with informal complaint should:

- Ensure that the individual's immediate care needs are being met before doing anything else.
- Try to establish if the complainant is happy for it to be dealt with as an informal complaint (i.e. it can be resolved immediately or by the person making the complaint within a short time).
- Explain that the complaint is appreciated.
- Offer an explanation and if appropriate an immediate apology for the events leading up to the raising of the issue or for any mistakes which contributed to the incident.
- Explain the action that will be taken as a result of the complaint.

- Check that the complainant is satisfied.
- Give the complainant a copy of this policy, if they wish to have a copy, which outlines how they can take the complaint further if they wish.
- Record the complaint on the Complaints Form (attached).
- Ensure the Manager and Responsible Individual receives the form by the next working day.
- The Manager will ensure that the complaint is entered in the Complaints Log.
- Every assistance should be given to individuals who wish to make a complaint.

Formal Complaints

Formal complaints are usually those that:

- Cannot be resolved “on the spot.”
- Require investigation.
- Formally written.

Whilst most formal complaints will be made in writing, it does not follow that all formal complaints will be written. Some verbal concerns will be classed as ‘Formal complaints’ due to the seriousness of their nature or possibly because the complainant may be unable to produce a written complaint, or the complaint is made by telephone. A staff member may need to put the complaint into writing on behalf of the complainant. In this case the staff member must confirm with the complainant that what they have written is an accurate record of the issue.

Procedure

1. Complaints can be made in person, by telephone or in writing, – we will ensure that:
 - the complaint is taken seriously and considered fairly.
 - the complaint is settled quickly.
 - the outcomes of the complaint are constructive.
 - the complaint is dealt with independently and impartially.
 - the person making the complaint is supported.
 - the details of the complaint are recorded truthfully.
 - intimidation of complainants is not tolerated.
 - the incidence of complaints is reported in the Quality Care Review.
2. All complaints received (whether written or verbal) will be logged and reported to the Manager.
3. Complainants (or representatives) will be consulted, and the Manager will investigate the complaint.
4. If the Manager identifies internal procedural weaknesses, the workforce will be consulted, and remedial action will be taken immediately.
5. If the Manager identifies that a member of staff is in ‘breach of contract’ in relation to the complaint received, disciplinary action will be taken.



6. All complaints will be responded to in writing and information will be provided to the complainant on what the outcome of the complaint was.
7. If the complainant is not happy with the outcomes of actions taken, support will be provided in escalating the complaint to an external regulatory body.
8. If it is suspected that an internal person with authority is the cause of the complaint, concerns must be reported directly to regulatory bodies.
9. If the complaint is against the Manager or the Responsible Individual then it will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Timescales

On receipt of a complaint the manager will immediately review to establish the level of investigation and immediate action required, including whether a referral to the appropriate authorities is appropriate.

The timescales and procedures which follow are outlined in the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

Vexatious Complaints

This organisation takes seriously any comments or complaints regarding its service. However, there are occasions where the complainant may be regarded as a vexatious complainant. This situation will typically arise where a person makes several complaints of a nature which despite the organisation's best efforts cannot be completed due to the complainant's desire to not reach a reasonable resolution, or where the complaint seems to be intended to maliciously cause time to be wasted. Vexatious complaints may need to be directed to the arbitration service in order that the time factor required to investigate time and time again becomes less of a burden on the company, its staff and other service users.

Our commitment to you

We will take your concerns and complaints seriously and, where we have made mistakes, will try to learn from them.

If you need help to make your concerns known, we will try and assist you. If you are a service user and need extra assistance the Welsh Government has established MEIC which is a national advocacy and advice helpline for children and service users. Advice and support can also be accessed from the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

Individuals will not suffer victimisation or any disadvantage, or the reduction or withdrawal of a service as a result of making representations or a complaint.

Other Agencies

If the complainant is unhappy with the process undertaken by the organisation, or if they wish to have the complaint investigated by an outside agency, then they can report their concerns to

Cardiff social care complaints <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Social-Services-and-Wellbeing/Make-a-complaint-or-comment-about-Social-Services/Pages/default.aspx>

Cardiff Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) -029 2053 6490.
Out of office hours Emergency Duty Team - 029 2078 8570.



Public services ombudsman for Wales <https://www.ombudsman.wales/>

Children's commissioner for Wales <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/>

Compliments

Definition

Compliments: Any expression of appreciation, gratitude, or satisfaction for the services provided by ACE.

Purpose

This policy is designed to create a framework for acknowledging and addressing compliments and positive feedback. ACE will use these compliments to encourage continuous improvement in the quality of care and services we provide.

Feedback

Service Users and Families will be encouraged to provide feedback, both positive and negative, to help us improve and celebrate our success. This may happen on an informal basis as well as when their opinion is canvassed formally, during service quality monitoring weeks and on leaving the service. All compliments and positive feedback will be acknowledged and appreciated. Compliments will be shared with the relevant staff or team to recognise and celebrate their achievements. Some compliments and positive feedback may be anonymised and placed on ACE's website.