

ORG006 Complaints Policy

Please contact HR if you require the document in large print, Braille or another language or alternative format.

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| Approved by: Liz Bates | |
| Issue Date: 27.11.17 | Review date :2019 |
| <p>Summary This policy covers the handling of comments and complaints made regarding Deafblind UK and its subsidiary About Me Care and Support Ltd (hereafter referred to as the Deafblind Group) services, service delivery or other activities. It is a public policy and anyone wishing to give feedback, positive or negative, on our services, is encouraged to use it.</p> | |
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| <p>Target Audience: All Staff, volunteers and members of the public</p> | |
| <p>Related documents Complaints Procedure Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy Data Protection Policy</p> | |

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| Signed |  |
| Position | CEO |
| Date | 27.11.18 |

Introduction

We believe that clients, their carers and their families, our members, funders and partners have the right to express their views, make complaints, suggestions or representations about the services The Deafblind UK Group provides and that, by doing so, they can improve the focus, quality and effectiveness of its services.

Policy Aim

The aim of the policy is to:

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is accessible, clear and easy for all to use.
- To make sure everyone at Deafblind UK Group knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or no, about any aspect of Deafblind UK Group services.

Informal complaints are normally raised verbally, but can include feedback and comments made as part of a satisfaction survey.

Formal complaints are normally made in writing.

Confidentiality

It is of paramount importance that customer/member confidentiality is maintained at all times and the investigation of a complaint does not remove the need to respect customer's/member's confidentiality. All work undertaken to resolve issues will conform to the legal framework as laid down by the requirements of the Data Protection Act and where relevant the Care Quality Commission.

However, if it is felt by any person that this complaint relates to a safeguarding concern, then the relevant policies will be adhered to. The relevant authorities will also be informed to ensure the immediate safety of the concerned individual.

Who can make a complaint

Anyone can make a complaint about The Deafblind Group's services and practices and every effort will be made to resolve any issues raised.

If someone requires support to make a comment or complaint then this assistance will be offered. This could include providing information on how to make a complaint in an alternative format, organising an interpreter or liaising with a specialist social worker. The Manager responsible should be informed in such circumstances to ensure that support is arranged.

Informal Complaints

Complaints are more likely to be resolved quicker if they are dealt with as they arise by those on the spot.

If you wish to make an informal complaint, you can do so in one of the following ways:

- Phone:

Call our switchboard on 01733 358100. You will be put through to the relevant person by the Receptionist.

Call our Information and Advice Line on 0800 132 320 and speak to one of our advisors

- Email: feedback@deafblind.org.uk or info@aboutme.org.uk
- In person: speak to your local Community Engagement Officer or Support Worker

All informal complaints will be dealt with within 5 working days, if not immediately, and a full response will be given to you by this time.

If you are not happy with the outcome then you can proceed to the formal complaints procedure.

Formal Complaints

If you feel that your response to the informal complaint was not resolved to your satisfaction at the time, then you can make a formal complaint in writing. Where support is required to do so it will be provided

Formal complaints should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer Mrs. Elizabeth Bates via post or email:

The Deafblind Group,
National Centre for Deafblindness
John and Lucille van Geest Place
Cygnet Road,
Hampton, PE7 8FD

Email: liz.bates@deafblind.org.uk

This complaint will then be directed to the appropriate Director/ Head Of Operations and an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent within 3 working days. A response in your preferred format will be sent within 28 working days of the date the complaint was received.

If it is not possible to complete the investigation within this time, the complainant should be sent a holding letter to inform them of the reason for the delay and when they can expect to receive a final outcome.

Appeal

If the issue remains unresolved an appeal letter can be put in writing to the Chief Executive within 10 working days of the complainant receiving the written confirmation of the outcome of their complaint.

This stage provides for an independent review of the process. Responses to this independent review will be sent within 28 working days of the date of the appeal letter, as described above.

Monitoring

All complaints are logged and monitored. The information collected is used to identify patterns, development opportunities and any improvement to the quality of our services made as a result of complaints.

Further Action

If you have exhausted The Deafblind Group procedure without satisfaction, or wish to pursue the matter independently, you can take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (responsible for social care complaints):

The Local Government Ombudsman
PO BOX 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

0300 061 0614 www.lgo.org.uk

The LGO does not normally investigate a complaint until the organisation involved has had an opportunity to respond and resolve matters.

For About Me Care and Support complaints you can contact the Care Quality Commission, the regulatory body for adult social care:

Care Quality Commission
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

03000 616161 www.cqc.org.uk

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of our investigation, you have the opportunity to refer your complaint to the Fundraising Standards Board, provided that you do this within two months of receiving the charity's final response.

Fundraising Standards Board
65 Brushfield Street
London
E1 6AA

0845 402 5442 complaint@frsb.org.uk

Time Limits for making a complaint

Complaints that involve issues which happened more than 6 months ago are often difficult or impossible to investigate in a full and fair manner. We will therefore not normally consider complaints made more than 6 months after the date of the event which gives rise to the complaint or the date the complainant became aware of it. Where it is decided not to consider a complaint the relevant Director will confirm in writing the reasons for this decision.

When we won't respond to a complaint

There may be rare occasions when we choose not to respond to a complaint. This includes:

- When a complaint is about something that is not connected to Deafblind UK Group
- When a complainant is being obviously abusive, prejudiced or offensive in their manner
- When the complainant is harassing a staff member
- When a complaint has clearly been sent to us as part of a bulk mailing or email
- When the complainant is being unreasonably persistent in their complaints. If we have already responded to the complaint we will give the complainant information on how to escalate it or appeal, but we may choose not to reply again
- When a complaint is made anonymously

Unacceptable Behaviour

We do not expect our staff to tolerate behaviour by people which is abusive, offensive or threatening and will take action to protect staff from such behaviour.

When a person's behaviour is considered unacceptable he/she will be told why their behaviour is unreasonable and asked to change it. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, action will be taken to restrict the person's contact with The Deafblind Group.

Comments and Compliments

We welcome compliments about our work or comments on how we can improve any aspect of our work or service delivery. You can make a comment or compliment in the same ways as you can make a complaint (see above). All compliments and comments are recorded and any actions we can take to improve our services will be considered. We will inform staff that their good practice has been noted.