

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Circles Network aims to provide its members, organisations and individuals with the best possible service. Circles Network welcomes feedback, including complaints arising in regard to our services or operations. These allow us to correct any problems with our service, give us a chance to improve our relationships, and enable us to learn how to improve our service quality.

This policy and procedure is for use by people who are supported by Circles Network, along with their families, advocates, professionals or others who have an interest in the organisation.

Circles Network needs and values the views and opinions of the people that we support and their representatives. We are often dependent on the sensitivity, empathy and concern of the significant people in their lives to be made aware of or to raise concerns or complaints on their behalf.

Usually, a word with the person at the point of service delivery will suffice should a problem arise. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be occasions when people who use our services or support feel that the quality or level of service provided fall short of what they could reasonably expect. We want to know about these occasions so that we can make good the problem and plan to avoid its repetition.

Circles Network will ensure:

- That people supported and/or all significant people in their lives are fully conversant with the Complaints Procedure and that it is expressed in a user friendly and accessible manner.
- People and their representatives will be encouraged to use the procedure.
- Staff will be trained in this policy and the associated procedures.
- Wherever possible, complaints will be resolved at a local level.
- Managers will record all suggestions, concerns and complaints received and action taken.

- Management and staff are committed to its effectiveness and to ensure that it is fair to both complainant and respondent.
- Confidentiality will be maintained as far as is practicable and individuals will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation, along with reasons for any delays
- Where a complaint involves other external agencies there should be full co-operation with that agency in seeking to resolve the complaint
- All formal complaints and the response made to them will be recorded and filed in a secure place.

Procedure

1. If you have a complaint to make, it should be made to the Regional Coordinator who will try to resolve the issue informally. If resolution cannot be achieved the matter should be raised as soon as possible but no later than five working days after the initial complaint has been raised.
2. If the issue is serious, or you are not satisfied after raising it with the Regional Coordinator, you should make a formal complaint.
3. Your complaint should be made in writing, marked Private & Confidential and sent to the Chief Executive Officer who will acknowledge it in writing (normally within seven days of receipt), and investigate the matter. Remember to keep a copy of your letter. If you need an interpreter or advocate in order to assist you in making a complaint, then this can be arranged for you.
4. The Chief Executive Officer shall communicate the results of the investigation to you within a reasonable time - normally 21 days. If necessary the Chief Executive Officer will raise the matter with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
5. You have the right - if dissatisfied with the results of the investigation - to put your case in writing, or in person, to a panel comprising at least three members from the Circles Network Board of Trustees. The process for this will be outlined in the response from the Chief Executive Officer.

If attending in personal, you have the right to be accompanied by a friend or advocate to help put your case.

6. The decision of the panel will be final.

7. Where appropriate, Circles Network will make a written apology to the complainant, and agree any further action necessary to make good the cause of the complaint.

8. The Board of Trustees shall be informed by the Chief Executive Officer at the first available meeting of the number and nature of any formal complaints and their outcome, and consideration will be given to the implications these have for the planning and management of future services annually, as part of Circles Network's self-evaluation.

Complaints Procedure Checklist

This checklist is to be used when investigating a complaint as part of the organisation's Complaints policy.

Date:

Have you conveyed verbally to the complainant the investigation procedure and timescale?	YES/NO
Have you conducted an interview to establish background to and detail of the complaint?	YES/NO
Have you written a statement about the complaint which you have dated and signed?	YES/NO
Has the complainant countersigned as correct the statement you have taken?	YES/NO
Have you given a copy of the complaint to those associated with its contents?	YES/NO
Have you asked, in writing, for a statement from those associated with the complaint within an agreed period of time?	YES/NO
Have you received the statements within the agreed time period?	YES/NO
Have you advised those being interviewed that they can have a union representative or friend with them?	YES/NO
Have you interviewed all those associated with the complaint?	YES/NO
Have you written up, signed, and dated your notes from each of these interviews?	YES/NO
Have you reviewed all the evidence placed before you?	YES/NO
Have you assessed whether or not you feel there are grounds for complaint?	YES/NO
If so, have you considered all the options for action that could/should be taken as a result?	YES/NO
Are you clear in your own mind what will be the content of the discussion about this investigation and its findings?	YES/NO
Have you discussed the findings of your investigation and your recommendations for action?	YES/NO
Have you put these formally in writing, together with the statements and notes taken during the course of the investigation?	YES/NO