

Complaints Policy – general

A)POLICY STATEMENT

NCEPOD believes that if a stakeholder or member of the public wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. It is our policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments are taken seriously.

The policy is not designed to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to provide compensation. It is NOT part of NCEPOD's disciplinary policy.

NCEPOD believes that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems, dissatisfaction and possible litigation. NCEPOD supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted out between just the complainant and NCEPOD.

B)PROCEDURE

- 1) Our Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for handling complaints within our organisation if they cannot be resolved by the initial staff member. They will work alongside other members of our organisation who have been identified as relevant to the investigation of each complaint.

Verbal complaints

- All verbal complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, should be taken seriously. There is nothing to be gained by staff adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- If staff cannot solve the problem immediately they should offer to get the manager to deal with the problem.
- All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous and sympathetic.
- At all times staff should remain calm and respectful.
- Staff should not accept blame, make excuses or blame other staff.
- After talking the problem through, each manager or the member of staff dealing with the complaint should suggest a course of action to resolve the complaint. If this course of action is acceptable then the member of staff should clarify the agreement with the complainant and agree a way in which the results of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant (i.e. through another meeting or by email).
- If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant then the member of staff or manager should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing to the Chief Executive of NCEPOD and give them a copy of the complaints procedure and form for completion.
- In both cases details of the complaints should be recorded on a complaints form and handed to the Manager.

Written complaints

- When a complaint is received in writing it should be passed on to the Line Manager who should notify the Chief Executive (if not the Chief Executive) and record it in the complaints book and send an acknowledgment letter within two working days. .
- If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a legal advisor to NCEPOD (M Bonehill and Partners). If legal action is taken at this stage any review by NCEPOD under the complaints procedure should cease immediately.

- Immediately on receipt of the complaint NCEPOD should launch a review and within 28 days should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.
- If the issues are too complex to complete the review within 28 days, the complainant should be informed of any delays.
- If a meeting is arranged the complainant should be advised that they may, if they wish, bring a friend or relative or a representative such as an advocate.
- At the meeting a detailed explanation of the results of the review should be given and also an apology if it is deemed appropriate (apologising for what has happened need not be an admission of liability).
- Such a meeting gives NCEPOD the opportunity to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.
- A written account of the review should be sent to the complainant.
- The outcomes of the review and the meeting should be recorded on appropriate documentation and any shortcomings in NCEPOD's procedures should be identified and acted upon.
- NCEPOD should discuss complaints and their outcome at the Trustee meeting which occur quarterly.