



# Complaints Procedure

| Version 1.4 – January 2024 |

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## Introduction:

### 1. Purpose:

This policy is to provide a means of redress for those unhappy with the services of, and actions of Staff Power Group and to improve the quality and services of procedures. Users of Staff Power Group services, staff, volunteers and partner organisations have the right to make a representation criticising or praising services provided. Having a Complaints Procedure is a critical part of maintaining our creditability as a service provider and therefore the way in which representations are handled is important

### 2. Scope:

This policy applies to:

Services delivered at all outreach premises by staff in employment of Staff Power Group.

### 3. Policy Governance:

The following table identifies who within Staff Power Group is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and implementing the policy.
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy.
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation or amendment.
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation or amendment.

<b>Responsible</b>	Director - Dave Macmillan
<b>Accountable</b>	Director - Dave Macmillan
<b>Consulted</b>	Head of Operations - Lee Johnston
<b>Informed</b>	All Staff

#### **4. Applying the Policy:**

Information held on the Complaints file will primarily be used for the planning of future services and to ensure that service users, volunteers and partner organisations get the best quality service possible.

- Comments and complaints will be welcomed and responded to positively and promptly. They can come from clients, from purchasers, from volunteers and partner organisations and from our own staff
- Any person wishing to make a complaint may be supported and accompanied by a person of their choice. Where there may be language or communication difficulties, Staff Power Group will make every effort to enable effective communication, through the provision of appropriate support.
- Comments and complaints will be dealt with courteously, fairly and will be kept confidential.
- If a complaint is directed at a particular member of staff, he/she will be given the opportunity to respond. Any correspondence, report or other record relating to the representation will be available to all concerned unless they contain confidential information. No member of staff will investigate a complaint against him/herself.
- Complainants will be kept informed of the course of their complaints and of the action being taken throughout.
- Staff Power Group operates an open access policy for clients to look at their own files at any time – this includes access during the Complaints procedure.
- All clients and purchasers will be informed that Staff Power Group has a Complaints Procedure.
- Staff Power Group will make every effort to deliver services with the aim of full customer satisfaction.

#### **5. Procedure**

##### **5.1 Overview**

Complaints can come from clients, a representative of a client, a potential client, a purchaser, volunteers and partner organisations or staff members.

Complaints can come in any form - verbal or written.

Definition of a complaint;- a complaint arises when an issue is brought forward that remains irreconcilable and either party wants further action to be taken, and/or where there has been a [serious] breach of Staff Power Group's policies.

### **5.1.1 Stage 1 of procedure**

The first stage of the Complaints Procedure will be dealt with within the project or location concerned.

The staff member initially receiving any complaint should clarify that it is the complainant's intention to raise a formal complaint and ascertain what action they would like us to take. Is it:

- An issue that a client wishes to bring to the attention of Staff Power Group without requiring any further action to be taken, other than its being recorded?
- A complaint that they wish to have formally investigated and resolved?

Failure to record complaints made verbally, by phone or in writing will be viewed as a disciplinary matter, as will deliberate attempts to obstruct users from knowing about and using the system.

All complaints must first be brought to the attention of the Tutor/Team Leader (if they are the subject of the complaint, see below for guidance). The complaint will be recorded on a complaints form (Appendix 1), signed and agreed by the complainant. The entry will include; complainant's name, date of complaint, nature of complaint, who is dealing with it, current action being taken and the outcome. Any person making a representation will receive a written acknowledgement within 5 working days and a formal response within 28 days. Anonymous complaints will be registered, but can only be acted upon when a pattern of inappropriate behaviour is suggested.

Where complaints/allegations are of a serious nature and/or are in respect to a Tutor/Team Leader they will be reported to a Manager on the same day. Where allegations concern the conduct of the Manager involved, they should be passed on immediately to a Director. Clients can make a complaint direct to a Director, should they have any concerns about dealing with the matter with the project lead.

If the complaint is resolved and the user is satisfied with the outcome, no further action will be required and this should be recorded in the Complaints file together with a Statement of Satisfaction signed by the complainant.

### **5.1.2 Stage 2 of procedure**

If the complainant is unhappy with the decision after Stage 1 (above) then it will require resolution at a higher level. The Tutor/Team Leader should notify a Manager in writing within 2 days. This may also be done at the request of the complainant, even if the Tutor/Team Leader believes the matter could be resolved at their level.

In all cases proceeding to Stage 2 and beyond a Manager will be appointed as Investigating Lead to impartially investigate and report on the complaint.

The matter will be investigated and a full, written reply will be sent within 28 days of the representation being made and sent to the complainant's home address. This will include a decision as whether the complaint or aspects of it have been upheld and where appropriate what action is to be taken.

Where complaints legally require that we involve and relinquish responsibility to other agencies (e.g. police, social services) then delays may result in any action that Staffpower can take. Some complaints may result in action being taken under the terms of other Staffpower Group policies which will have to take precedence until they are completed.

The outcome of this should be registered in the Stage 2 Investigations section of the Complaints File kept at the Head Office of Staffpower Group.

### **5.1.3 Stage 3 of procedure**

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome from Stage 2, he/she should register this in writing within 14 working days of receiving written notification of the outcome of the complaint. Staff Power Group will then call an independent panel comprising: 1 relevant Agency Partner's Senior Manager and 1 independent person to Chair. The person making the representation will be informed of the date on which the panel will meet and will be given the opportunity to attend the meeting with a representative of their choosing; at this Stage, both parties (Staff Power Group and person making representation) may be present and may present their case to the panel.

The Complaints panel may commission an independent investigation in its absolute discretion.

All complaints made under the terms of the Whistleblowers Policy (matters of serious malpractice or impropriety) will be brought directly to Stage 3 and dealt with at this level. The director of the company will consult and where necessary an investigation will be initiated.

The panel may at its sole discretion decide to verbally inform the parties of the outcome of the meeting immediately, nevertheless a further written reply will then be sent within 28 days of the panel's meeting. The panel will make its decision in private.

### **5.1.4 Stage 3 of procedure**

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome from Stage 3, he/she should register this in writing within 14 working days of receiving written notification of the outcome of the complaint. Staffpower will then call an

independent panel comprising: 1 relevant Agency and Partner/Director (independent). The person making the representation will be informed of the date on which the panel will meet and will be given the opportunity to attend the meeting with a representative of their choosing; at this Stage, both parties (Staffpower and person making representation) may be present and may present their case to the panel.

The Complaints panel may commission an independent investigation in its absolute discretion.

The panel may at its sole discretion decide to verbally inform the parties of the outcome of the meeting immediately, nevertheless a further written reply will then be sent within 28 days of the panel's meeting. The panel will make its decision in private.

## 5.2 After the decision

At any of the above stages, the relevant Investigating Manager may interview the relevant parties, giving reasonable notice of the interview, in writing.

Staff Power Group will do all it can to keep the complainant informed and, on completion, the complainant will be notified in writing, of the outcome and reasons for actions and decisions made.

## 5.3 Legal proceedings

Should any party undertake legal proceedings, use of the Complaints Procedure will be reviewed by a Director, who may decide to suspend the Complaints Procedure until legal proceedings have finished.

## 6. Policy Compliance:

If any user is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Staff Power Group's disciplinary procedure. If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed further action may be taken to assist in the prosecution of the offender(s).

If you do not understand the implications of this policy or how it may apply to you, seek advice from your Line Manager or Company Director.

## 7. Review and Revision:

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 12 months.

Policy review will be undertaken by Staff Power Group's Directors.

## 8. References:

The following Staff Power Group policy documents are directly relevant to this policy:-

❖ Disciplinary Procedure

<b>Policy Commencement Date</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
<b>Policy Version</b>	Version 1.4
<b>Date of Review</b>	January 2024
<b>Date of next review</b>	January 2025
<b>Signature</b>	L. Johnston



# Complaints Form

Customer Information	
Name:	Telephone:
Address:	
Postcode:	E-mail:

Complaint Information	
Date of complaint:	Complaint taken by:
Complaint Details:	
First response / Corrective Action:	
Date:	By:
Corrective Action Follow Up:	
Date:	By:
Cause of Complaint:	Steps to avoid repeat:
Outcome:	Date:

**Complaint Notes / Actions recorded (Official Use Only)**

Date