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*Share.*

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a centre of excellence  
in psychotherapy

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## **Suggestions, Comments and Complaints Policy**

### **Introduction**

Share aims to provide a high quality service. In order to know we are achieving this we need to know when users of our service feel that the service has not met their expectations or when the standard falls below that which is acceptable. By enabling them to bring problems to our attention we will aim to put things right for those concerned while also reviewing our work to ensure the problem does not recur. All involved will try to ensure that such situations are handled sensitively and resolved amicably, if possible informally.

However, there will be occasions when the informal approach will not be sufficient to settle an individual's dissatisfaction, and matters may need to be handled in a more structured way.

This procedure does not cover disciplinary matters relating to staff or volunteers, for which there is a separate procedure.

### **2. Informal procedure**

2.1 When an individual has a comment, suggestion or concern about Share's services, they should be encouraged to raise the matter informally. Most issues can be effectively resolved in this way. This can be done verbally or in writing:

- by speaking directly to any member of staff or volunteer
- asking to speak to the Clinical Manager
- writing to the Clinical Manager whose contact details are:

Clinical Manager : Share Psychotherapy,  
73 Wilkinson Street  
Sheffield S10 2GJ  
Telephone: 0114 2730200

- 2.2 When an issue is raised informally we will endeavour to come to an agreement with the individual concerned. This will normally be done by inviting them to come to Share to discuss their concern, and taking any action that is needed as a consequence. Any outcomes or progress of that action will be fed back to the individual immediately if possible, or if not, within 5 working days.

### 3. Formal Complaints Procedure

- 3.1 If the individual feels the issue has not been adequately dealt with informally or where the issue is of such seriousness that the informal procedure is not appropriate, they may wish to make a formal complaint.
- 3.2 The formal complaints procedure has 2 stages:

#### Stage One

The complaint should be made directly to the Clinical Manager (contact details above).

This can be done:

- by writing a letter (please include as much detail as possible).
- by sending an email
- by telephone
- by asking for a meeting with the Clinical Manager.

The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and this will include a copy of this procedure. The course of action will depend on the nature of the complaint but could include raising the issue with the staff or volunteer concerned or a more detailed investigation if the matters complained of are more complex. The complaint will be dealt with and the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome within 28 days of the complaint being received.

If the complaint is being made against the Clinical Manager, it will be referred to the Chair of Trustees, who will decide the action to be taken to handle or investigate it. The Chair will not be directly involved in the investigation or resolution of the complaint.

#### Stage Two

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of Stage One they can refer the complaint to the Board of Trustees. This should be done in writing and addressed to the Chair of Trustees c/o Share. It should be done within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage One.

The Trustees will appoint a panel comprising at least two Trustees and an independent person who is not a trustee or member of staff of Share. The panel will meet within 28 days of the complaint being received and the complainant will be given at least 14 days notice of the meeting date. The panel will come to a decision about the complaint and identify any further action that needs to be taken. They will report to the Chair of the Trustees who may consult with other members of the Board. The complainant will be informed of the outcome in writing within seven days. This decision is final.

- 3.3 At all stages in this procedure, the complainant may be assisted and accompanied by another person of their choice, but not someone acting in a legal capacity. At all stages the time limit may be altered by mutual agreement.
- 3.4 A poster will be displayed in a public area of the office stating the procedure for making comments, suggestions and complaints (Appendix 1).
- 3.5 All staff should be made aware of this policy on commencement of their employment. It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that all staff who report to them are aware of and adhere to the policy framework within which Share operates and to keep them abreast of updated and new policies as soon as practicable. The Complaints Policy should be brought to the attention of service users and others through publicity such as the website, notice boards and leaflets.

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