

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Path is committed to providing fair, effective and client-focused services. We are therefore always pleased to receive comments on our services, which we take seriously and learn from.

All staff are aware that clients and partners have a right to make comments on the service that they receive. Path services literature notes this, with brief details of how to begin this process. These notes address complaints, which may be made by clients, by partner agencies or others.

Process

In the first instance the member of staff who is dealing with the client, or other agency, may realise that they may not be satisfied with the service. The member of staff should always acknowledge the fact and seek to address any issues. They may therefore be able to deal with the matter successfully, to the satisfaction of the client / partner.

All staff members who deal with complaints in the above manner will write brief notes on the nature of the complaint and pass them to the relevant service manager for reading, potentially responding to and filing, copying in the Director. (The manager's or Director's response may be to review certain procedures or training, for instance.)

If the nature of the complaint is such that the member of staff cannot resolve, the complaint should be taken either verbally or in writing. These formal complaints should be taken to the Director to respond to. If the client does not want to give the complaint to the worker they are engaging with then they should be informed that they could either write, telephone or deliver the complaint personally to the relevant manager or the Director. Equally, they may ask for the support of another worker to use this process.

The manager or Director will deal with, address and respond to the complaint within 7 working days. This may involve further liaison with the client or the worker involved, if any. Where full investigation of the complaint is going to take longer, the complaint will be acknowledged and a timescale for dealing with it will be notified to the client.

If the client is not satisfied with the response from the manager, then the complaint can be taken to the Director or – where relevant – the Chair of the board of trustees, who will investigate the complaint. A written response will be sent within 7 working days, again unless more time is needed to investigate, in which case an acknowledgement will be sent along with a timescale for dealing with the matter.

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If the client considers that the complaint is very serious or the complaint concerns the Director then the complaint can be directed in the first instance to the Chair of the board.

Learning

Path aims to always learn from feedback and uses it as part of continuous review and improvement. Matters thus raised may therefore (anonymously) be raised in review, board or Client Reference Group meetings, as Path seeks to improve its services.

See also: guidance notes for managers on complaints handling.