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| **Policy Title** | Client Complaints Policy and Procedure |
| **Version Date** | Jan 2023 |
| **Next Review Date** | Jan 2024 |

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| **1** | **Purpose & Scope** |
| 1.1 | Care Merseyside view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation which has made the complaint. This policy and procedure sets out the measures to ensuring that any complaints from clients are handled fairly, swiftly and appropriately.  |
| 1.2 | The policy applies to all clients and service users of Care Merseyside, including external agencies which might refer their clients to the organisation. It also applies to clients of Care Merseyside, for issues which go beyond normal process such as refunds and replacements and relate to actions taken by staff of the organisation with which a client is dissatisfied. |
| **2** | **Client Complaints Policy Detail** |
| 2.1 | For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Care Merseyside. |
| 2.2 | Complaints may come from any person or organisation that has a legitimate interest in Care Merseyside including centre clients and staff. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. |
| 2.3 | Care Merseyside policy regarding complaints is:* To provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
* To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
* To make sure everyone at the Care Merseyside knows what to do if a complaint is received.
* To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
* To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
* To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.
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| 2.4 | All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know, and following any relevant data protection requirements. |
| 2.5 | All complaints will be recorded and kept on file, including those which were resolved without being put in writing. All complaints shall be treated with regard to the Confidentiality Policy. |
| **3** | **Client Complaints Procedure – Submitting a complaint** |
| 3.1 | Complaints can be submitted to any member Care Merseyside staff or trustees by any method, including:* Handed in using Care Merseyside complaints form,
* Sent to Care Merseyside, Knowsley Medical Centre, L34 0HF.
* By e-mail to cathy@caremerseyside.org.uk
* Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 0151 6072873 or in person to any of Care Merseyside’s staff, Management Team or Trustees.
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| 3.2 | Complaints received by telephone or verbally in person will be recorded for clarity, including the following:* The facts of the complaint
* The complainant's name, address and telephone number
* The relationship of the complainant to Care Merseyside for example: service user, adviser, referral partner.
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| **4** | **Client Complaints Procedure – Complaint handling** |
| **4.1** | **Stage Two** |
| 4.1.1 | In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate, within 24 hrs. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to Care Merseyside’s Trustees within a maximum of 7 days. |
| 4.1.2 | All complaints will be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a maximum of 7 days. The acknowledgement will say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.  |
| 4.1.3 | On receiving the complaint, a member of Care Merseyside Trustees will record it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved (see 4.1.1 above), they will allocate an appropriate person, uninvolved in the case and with no conflict of interests to ensure impartiality, to investigate the complaint. If the complaint relates to the manager, the investigation will be undertaken by a member of the Board of Trustees. |
| 4.1.3 | The investigation itself will be thorough and methodical and include:* The examination of all appropriate written/electronic records in any media
* The interviewing of all persons implicated in the complaint
* Compliance with Care Merseyside’s data protection and confidentiality policies
* An investigation report, which will include: the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.
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| 4.1.4 | The complainant will receive a definitive response to their complaint within a maximum of 8 weeks. |
| **4.2** | **Stage Two** |
| 4.2.1 | If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they will have the opportunity to refer the complaint to Care Merseyside’s Chair of Trustees. |
| 4.2.2 | On receiving the complaint, the Chair of Trustees will undertake their own investigation into the complaint, which may include further review of the original evidence, as well as interviews with persons implicated as necessary. |
| 4.2.3 | The Chair of Trustees will issue a Stage Two investigation report which will include; the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complain |
| 4.2.4 | The complainant will receive a definitive response to their complaint within a maximum of 4 weeks. |
| **4.3** | **External Stage** |
| 4.1 | If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they will be told that their complaint can be referred to and reviewed by the Charity Commission. The complainant will be directed to the relevant information and guidance for making a complaint to the Charity Commission. |
| **4** | **Responsibility / Implementation** |
| 4.1 | Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Care Merseyside’s management. |
| 4.2 | Care Merseyside will make a report once a year to the Trustees summarising the nature of complaints received and how they were resolved. |