

# Complaints Procedure



Triangle

<b>POLICY AWARENESS</b>	
<b>Who needs to know this policy in detail?</b>	All directors, senior managers and supervisors
<b>Who needs to have a broad understanding of this policy?</b>	Everyone involved with those who use or commission our services
<b>Who needs to know that this policy exists?</b>	All employees of Triangle need to know of this policy and where to find it

## Introduction

Triangle wishes to encourage children, young people and others who use or commission our services to make comments, suggestions or complaints about the support and services we provide. This will enable Triangle to improve its services and to maintain quality across the organisation.

Triangle is committed to working in partnership with children and young people, taking seriously the feelings and perceptions of the child or young person and those most closely involved in their lives. Triangle is advised by several consultative groups of children and young people; these groups help us with our work at many levels.

The aim of this procedure is to set out the way in which people using Triangle's services and others may complain about any aspect of Triangle's work. Staff who wish to make complaints on their own behalf should follow Triangle's Grievance Procedure.

## Principles

Triangle accepts the six principles of good complaint handling, as contained in the guidance produced by the Health Service Ombudsman:

- getting the complaint handling right
- being customer focussed
- being open and accountable
- acting fairly and proportionately
- putting things right
- seeking continuous improvement.

When anyone expresses dissatisfaction with a service Triangle has provided, it is not always the case that the service delivery has failed in any way. In some instances the client may not have understood the nature of the service provision or may have had other expectations. Nonetheless the client has expressed dissatisfaction, and our complaint response should reflect our recognition of this, with an expression of regret that this has occurred, but also an explanation of the reason(s) why the service could not meet their expectations.

On the other hand, when there has clearly been a service failure the complaint response should unambiguously reflect this, and an apology be made.

## **Inviting Feedback from Children and Young People**

We actively encourage children and young people to feedback on their experience of Triangle. Triangle staff working with children and young people need to let them know this at a level appropriate to their age and understanding, at some point during our involvement. Changing or closing our involvement are the times you must actively seek feedback – ask what worked, what didn't; ask what we could do better; ask what they would tell another child/young person their age who is about to come to Triangle/be visited by someone from Triangle.

The invitation below is available in a range of formats and we also have photo based feedback forms about visiting Triangle. The essential messages from Triangle are:

- We need to know what you think about Triangle, so please tell us
- You can tell us what you think when we come to see you or when you are at Triangle
- Or we will give you a contact card so you can phone us, text us, email or write to us.
- Or you can tell the person you know from Triangle
- Or you can tell one of the bosses in Triangle
- Or you can tell another young person in Triangle
- You can have a friend or family member with you if you want
- We promise to listen carefully
- We promise never to be angry
- We promise to do our best to sort out anything that goes wrong.

## **Customer Service Queries, Compliments and Feedback**

Triangle staff should ensure that all customer service queries, compliments and feedback should be acknowledged within one working day.

Compliments, complaints and feedback can be submitted via our website [www.triangle.org.uk](http://www.triangle.org.uk)

As well as via post, email and telephone or in person.

## **Procedure for facilitating and recording a complaint**

Triangle staff should ensure that people using services and their families are aware of how to make a complaint and understand the processes involved.

Triangle will make every effort to ensure that the complaints process is accessible and can explore a range of media with the individual – it may be that the child or young person wants to make an audio or video recording detailing their complaint, or to explore this through drawing. If a child or young person wishes to make a complaint and needs assistance to complete the form, a member of staff, relative, friend, advocate or another person could complete the form on their behalf.

Each complaint must be recorded onto the Triangle Complaints Form, even those where the person making the complaint does not wish to give their name. If a complaint is made in a different format, the staff member handling the complaint will transfer the relevant details onto a form for record keeping purposes.

If a complaint is made by telephone, details should be noted, repeated to the person and transferred onto the Triangle Complaints Form. The caller must be advised that their complaint will be recorded in this way. The Complaints Form should be filed and a copy sent to the Directors.

The following process will be used when a complaint is received:

1. Complaint received in person, by phone, email or letter.
2. Triangle's complaint form to be completed.
3. Director on-call to be informed of complaint.
4. Director to allocate member of staff to deal with complaint (member of staff will not have been directly involved in this case).
5. Acknowledgement letter or email to be sent out within 1 working day of receiving complaint. Letter will give details of the named person dealing with complaint.
6. Named person to be given all details relating to complaint.
7. Named person to investigate, including meeting with staff involved.
8. Within 10 working days of receiving a complaint Triangle will provide:
  - a final response letter or
  - a holding response, to explain why Triangle has not been in a position to resolve the complaint and indicate when further contact will be made.
9. Await further response from complainant

### **Resolving the Complaint**

The complainant should be contacted within 1 working day of receiving the complaint with a letter or email of acknowledgement. Complaints will be investigated as soon as possible.

The person leading the investigation will gather information from all relevant sources, including the complainant, Triangle's telephone and network records and all staff involved, seeking witness statements where appropriate. Failure of a member of staff complained against to co-operate without good reason can become a disciplinary matter.

Where there are safeguarding concerns or significant concerns about a member of staff's job performance, the directors will decide whether the member of staff should be suspended pending a full investigation, and following an investigation, whether that member of staff may continue working. A director will immediately inform the complainant, the authority (Ministry of Justice), and any relevant legal teams.

### **Upheld Complaints**

Where a complaint is upheld, Triangle will take appropriate action to improve our services and/or delivery and make appropriate changes to our policy and procedures where needed. Triangle will respond to the complainant with a full account of decisions and any corrective actions where applicable.

The complaints manager must log, review and implement where relevant any lessons learned; recommendations and findings.

### **Not upheld Complaints**

If the Complaint is not upheld the investigating member of staff must provide full reasons why to the complainant and the Authority (Ministry of Justice)

## **Full response letter**

The response letter will be signed by the investigating member of staff on behalf of Triangle, sent to the Complainant and simultaneously copied to staff involved.

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome, they may contact the person handling the complaint, who will escalate the complaint to a director. A director will deal with the matter within 10 days of receiving the complaint (unless an extension is agreed).

Following this, if the person is still not satisfied, the complaint will be escalated to the Authority (Ministry of Justice) for investigation/resolution.

The Authority (Ministry of Justice) may then refer the complainant to the Witness Intermediary Scheme's Quality Assurance Board (QAB) for investigation/resolution.

## **Appeals**

Where a complaint has been escalated to the Authority (Ministry of Justice), If Triangle or the complainant is not satisfied with the response from The Authority, they are able to Appeal within 10 Days of receiving the outcome of the Complaint.

Complainants may lodge an appeal with Triangle if:

- A complainant has been told that Triangle will not follow up the concern as it does not meet the definition of a complaint
- A complainant is dissatisfied with the speed of the follow up process
- Triangle has provided a full response letter and the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome

If an appeal is lodged, the member of staff handling the call should:

- Obtain as much information as possible about the reason why the complainant is not satisfied
- Explain the appeals process to the complainant and advise them that the appeal will be passed to a director
- Contact the relevant director immediately, in writing. A director who was not involved in the original complaint will act as appeals manager
- Contact the complainant within 1 working day to inform them that the appeal has been passed to an appeals manager

## **Following an appeal**

The director acting as appeals manager will:

- Instruct the investigating member of staff where further lines of enquiry are identified

Where the appeal identifies that no further action is necessary the Appeals manager will:

- Inform the complainant that no further action will be taken and the reasons for this decision
- Advise the complainant if necessary that if they remain dissatisfied they can take the appeal to the next stage and lodge an appeal with the Authority (Ministry of Justice).

**Others to Contact**

A complaint may be made to the Directors of Triangle at any time. The person making the complaint should make contact via: FAO The Directors, Triangle, 7 Hunns Mere Way, Brighton, East Sussex. BN2 6AH. Tel No: 01273 305888 or email [info@triangle.org.uk](mailto:info@triangle.org.uk)

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