



Compliments, Grumbles, Complaints and Appeals Policy

April 2015

1.0 Compliments and Complaints

St Elizabeth's works with hundreds of individuals and organisations each week. We seek to provide the best possible level of services. The feedback we receive shows a high level of satisfaction with the way we work and the services we provide. However, sometimes we do not always handle matters as well as we should and we are always looking at ways to improve upon what we do.

We positively welcome suggestions for improvement and changes so we can stay at the forefront of service provision. If you have a compliment or complaint about our service please let us know (contact details are at the end of this leaflet).

N.B. If your complaint is specifically about a service offered by the School/ Children's Home, College or Adult Care Services, then please use their own complaints procedure, the policy below is for any other complaints not covered by those services. (The process is similar in each service apart from Appeals which may go to different committees as appropriate).

It is important to know when things are going well so that we can reinforce and build upon such work. It is also important for us to know when things have not gone so well. By encouraging people to make compliments, observations and raise grumbles or complaints we can find out how to put things right and continue to improve our services.

2.0 What is a Complaint?

We see a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by us or our staff or contractors where our initial response to the problem has not proven satisfactory. (Many issues can result from a simple misunderstanding and once explained or clarified need not developed into a complaint).

We do not consider a query or a request for a service, or a problem arising between service users, as a complaint unless you then have reason to complain about the way we are dealing with the situation.

We cannot respond to anonymous complaints but we can use all your comments and feedback to help influence and improve our services.

We cannot deal with complaints that have or are being dealt with by legal proceedings, contractual processes or third parties. Where possible we will refer you to the appropriate organisation to deal with your complaint.

3.0 Grumbles

Perhaps you are unhappy about something but don't really want to make a complaint, it might be something small or not too important, but we still take such feedback seriously. If you want to raise some grumble about our service then you can do so without having to make it into a formal complaint. This will help us put things right where necessary and improve your satisfaction with our service. You can raise a grumble, verbally or in writing, and we will try and respond to you within the same times we use for formal complaints. Don't worry about raising a grumble or complaint; you will not be treated less favourably as a result.

4.0 How do I Complain?

Comments and complaints may be received verbally or in writing. Complaints made on behalf of a service user should be made with their consent if they have capacity. Where an individual does not have the capacity to consent the complaint will be investigated in accordance with the appropriate policy. You must complain to us within 3 months of the problem taking place. Contact details for addressing your complaint to St Elizabeth's are shown at the end of this leaflet.

4.1 Stage One – Initial Complaint

In the first instance try again to reconcile the issue with the member of staff you are dealing with. Make it clear you are unhappy with their response and we will treat the matter as a complaint. A complaint at this stage maybe made over the phone or face to face but is best put in writing. We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receipt and tell you who is dealing with it, usually the manager of the person you have been dealing with. We will record your complaint and respond in writing within three weeks. If we have not completed our investigation within 3 weeks we will write at least every four weeks thereafter to keep you informed of progress.

If the matter is not dealt with in a timely manner or to your satisfaction then you should let the person involved know that you wish to take the complaint further, to Stage Two of our procedure.

4.2 Stage Two – if you are still unhappy.....

If you remain dissatisfied with our response under Stage One then your complaint will be referred to the relevant Director/Head of Department. You must complain within one month of receiving the Stage One response. At this stage your complaint should be in writing giving reasons for your continuing dissatisfaction. We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of its receipt. We will record your issues as a Stage Two complaint and try to respond within 3 weeks or keep you informed of progress at regular 4 weekly intervals if the investigations take longer.

4.3 Stage Three

An appeal against a Stage Two decision may be made in writing to the Chief Executive at St Elizabeth's Centre who will investigate and respond using the same timetables as apply to Stage Two.

4.4 Stage Four - Appeal to Trustees

Where a complainant remains unhappy with the outcome of Stage Two you can appeal to the Trustees within one month of receipt of the Chief Executive's decision. You should give the reasons for your appeal in writing and address your letter to the Chief Executive who will arrange for the Trustees to see your letter or letters of complaint and conduct an independent review of the case within a reasonable period of time. We will let you know the outcome of their review within 10 days of their deciding a decision in your appeal.

5.0 Unreasonable Behaviour or Demands

In pressing complaints some complainants may become aggressive to, or act in an intimidating manner towards, staff or others which is unacceptable. Some complainants may put unreasonable demands on the service to the disadvantage of others or persist in raising the same issue, taking up a disproportionate amount of time and resources. In any such cases the Chief Executive may decide to restrict complainant contact with the service or with staff. We will notify individual complainants in writing, with reasons, of any such temporary or permanent restrictions.

6.0 Service User Views

To assist service users in making a complaint we have produced a pictorial version of this policy and may facilitate the involvement of an independent advocate where appropriate. If a service user makes a comment and is not satisfied with the response a three stage process consistent with this policy will be followed by the Centre.

7.0 Contact Details

- 7.1** Please address a grumble or complaint, (at any stage in the process), to the Chief Executive who will ensure it receives an acknowledgement and appropriate response in accordance with this policy:

Chief Executive
St Elizabeth's Centre
Perry Green
Hertfordshire
SG10 6EW
Tel : 01279 844202
Email : ceo@stelizabeths.org.uk