

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to outline ASART's procedures for dealing with complaints made to the agency.
- 1.2 The function of these procedures is to enable all people with a legitimate interest to complain about how the agency is providing its services.
- 1.3 The aim of the procedures is to resolve complaints promptly and in a sensitive, thorough and objective manner.
- 1.4 All service users – potential and actual – are informed of their right to make complaints and are given a leaflet which includes a brief outline of the process.
- 1.5 Copies of the complaints procedure will be supplied upon request by service users.
- 1.6 A written record will be kept of all complaints, their outcomes and any action taken in response. This record will be retained confidentially and securely for at least three years from the date of the complaint. Where the complaint involves the conduct of a therapist a copy of the record will be kept with the Manager.
- 1.7 The agency will review the complaints procedure annually and provide details to the registration authority upon request.

2 COMPLAINTS

- 2.1 Service users and others with a legitimate interest have the right to make complaints to the agency about any aspect of its services if they believe it has acted in contravention of adoption law, regulation, guidance, standards or codes of practice: and/or if it has failed to adhere to its own written policies, procedures, standards or undertakings.
- 2.2 Complaints will be dealt with as promptly as possible.
 - Regulations require that complaints are dealt with within 20 working days as far as is reasonably practicable.
 - However, there may be circumstances which prevent this from happening in which case the complainant will receive a written explanation.
- 2.3 **Informal Stage:** Those wishing to make a complaint should bring this to the attention of the individual therapist who will make an appointment to discuss the complaint with the service user at which time they should try to reach an amicable resolution in a collaborative and cooperative spirit.

2.4 **Formal Complaint:** If a resolution is not possible and either party believes that the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, they should bring the matter to the attention of the Manager of ASART. If the Manager believes the situation requires further investigation he/she will ask the service user to put their concerns in writing, outlining their complaint.

2.5 **When the manager receives a complaint he/she will:**

- acknowledge the complaint in writing, including clarifying the nature of the complaint and advising the complainant that they will attempt to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible.
- record it in the agency's complaints file.
- interview the therapist concerned.
- provide a copy of the complaint to the therapist involved.
- continue to investigate the complaint.
- elect two agency members to formally hear the complaint, the details of which will be sent to the complainant and therapist concerned.
- the complainant will be invited to bring a friend or representative if they wish to attend the hearing but this does not include a legal advisor.
- ask the complainant to voice the complaint.
- ask the therapist to respond.
- write to inform the complainant of the agency's response.
- advise the complainant of the next stage if they are not satisfied with the response.
- record details of the conclusion and any action taken in relevant files.

2.6 **Complaints relating to the Manager:** In the event of the complaint relating to the Manager, the Assistant Manager will take on the role of Manager and follow the procedures accordingly.

3 OTHER AVENUES OF COMPLAINT

3.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the agency's response they have the right to contact the accrediting body of the individual therapist or they may make a complaint to the registration authority.

3.2 Details of how to contact the above will be supplied upon request.

4 RELEVANT CONTACTS

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