

Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy

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1.0 Policy Statement

Brightside acknowledges that despite our best efforts, sometimes things go wrong. When they do, we believe that it should be easy to raise a concern or make a complaint. As such we look upon any concerns raised as an opportunity to learn, adapt and improve to help us be the best service we can be. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments by service users and their relatives and carers are taken seriously.

We are committed to having a transparent complaints management system, and believe that failure to acknowledge, listen to and act upon concerns and complaints will lead to an aggravation of issues, service user dissatisfaction and damage our reputation as a provider of outstanding service. We believe that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be dealt with amicably between the complainant and Brightside. All efforts will be made to work with the complainant to resolve the concerns they have.

2.0 Aim

The aim of this policy is to outline Brightside's complaints procedure and ensure it is properly and effectively implemented, and that service users feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

3.0 Principles

- All service users, carers, and their representatives are made aware of how to complain, and easy to use opportunities are provided for them to register their complaints
- a complaint may be made by telephone, in person, in writing or by email
- a named person will be responsible for the administration of the procedure
- every written complaint will be acknowledged within two working days
- investigations into written complaints are held within 28 days
- all complaints will be responded to in writing by a Director
- complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to both staff and service users.

4.0 Time limits

A complaint must be made no later than 12 months after:

- the date the event occurred or, if later,
- the date the event came to the notice of the complainant.

The time limit will not apply if Brightside is satisfied that:

- the complainant can give a good reason for not making the complaint within that time limit, and
- despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

5.0 Oral Complaints

- All complaints will be acknowledged within three working days
- Where a complaint is made in person or on the telephone Brightside will make a written record of the complaint and provide a copy of the written record within three working days.
- All oral complaints, no matter their content, should be taken seriously.
- Front line staff who receive an oral complaint should seek to solve the problem immediately if possible.
- If staff cannot solve the problem immediately they should offer to get the manager to deal with the problem.
- All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous and sympathetic.
- At all times staff should remain calm and respectful.
- Staff should not make excuses or blame other staff.
- After talking the problem through, each manager or the member of staff dealing with the complaint should suggest a course of action to resolve the complaint. If this course of action is acceptable then the member of staff should clarify the agreement with the complainant and agree a way in

which the results of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant (ie through another meeting or by letter).

- If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant then the member of staff or manager should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing and address it to the Directors. The complainant should be given a copy of the complaints procedure and form for completion.
- Brightside will keep the complainant informed about the progress of any investigation

6.0 Written Complaints

- When a complaint is received in writing it should be passed on to the manager who should record it in the complaints log and send an acknowledgment letter within two working days. The manager will be the named person who deals with the complaint through the process.
- If necessary, further details should be obtained from the complainant. If the complaint is not made by the service user but on the service user's behalf, then consent of the service user, preferably in writing, must be obtained from the complainant.
- A leaflet detailing the procedure should be forwarded to the complainant.
- If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a Director. If legal action is taken at this stage any investigation by Brightside under the complaints procedure should cease immediately.
- Immediately on receipt of the complaint Brightside will launch an investigation and within 28 days should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.
- If the issues are too complex to complete the investigation within 28 days, the complainant should be informed of any delays.
- If a meeting is arranged the complainant should be advised that they may, if they wish, bring a friend or relative or a representative such as an advocate.
- At the meeting a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation should be given and also an apology if it is deemed appropriate
- Such a meeting gives Brightside the opportunity to demonstrate to the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.
- After the meeting, or if the complainant does not want a meeting, a written account of the investigation should be sent to the complainant.
- The outcomes of the investigation and the meeting should be recorded on appropriate documentation and any key learning points for Brightside should be identified and acted upon.
- Brightside will discuss complaints and their outcome at team meetings.

7.0 Responsibilities

7.1 The Directors have responsibility for the implementation of this policy and will deal with any complaints received.

7.2 All staff have a responsibility to give service users, their families and any relevant others details of the complaints policy.

7.3 Service users and their families have a responsibility to raise any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

8.0 Compliments

Receiving compliments is an opportunity to celebrate and recognise success.
Brightside will ensure that:

- All compliments are shared with staff and displayed in a public area to highlight good practice
- Compliments are anonymised or permission sought before displaying
- Numbers of compliments received are logged as part of a quality assurance programme

- Verbal positive feedback from Service Users and relatives is also deemed as compliments and will be recorded and shared with colleagues
- Compliments form a core agenda item at staff meetings and reviews

9.0 Suggestions

- Suggestions can be made verbally or in writing and generally are in response to seeking a means of changing practice for the better.
- Suggestions are not complaints, but in some circumstances, if they are not considered or actioned they could lead to a complaint.
- When suggestions are raised in meeting or as part of a conversation, these will be documented and then outcomes of such suggestion recorded to show consideration
- Staff will be encouraged to share their suggestions or suggestions received by relatives and Service Users with the management team.

10. Audit and Evaluation

Brightside Supported Living Services will monitor, review and analyse all information received about the service as a means of continuously reviewing performance, quality and safety.

Brightside Supported Living Services will also:

- Share themes and trends with Support Workers working for Brightside Supported Living Services
- Ensure that staff are trained to deal with complaints and understand the procedure for managing complaints

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every 3 years, sooner if necessary.

Complaints Procedure

Brightside are committed to having a transparent complaint management system, and we look upon any concerns raised as an opportunity to learn, adapt and improve. All efforts will be made to work with the complainant to resolve the concerns they have and ensure they are not repeated.

Who can complain?

- someone who receives or has received services
- someone who is affected (or likely to be affected) by the action, omission or decision of Brightside who is the subject of the complaint

We are only able to accept complaints from a representative under certain conditions;

- where the service user has consented, either verbally or in writing or:
- where the service user cannot complain unaided and cannot give consent because they lack capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, **and**
- the representative is acting in the service user's best interests – for example, where the matter complained about, if true, would be detrimental to the service user

How can I complain?

A complaint may be made by telephone, in person, in writing or by email.

✉ info@brightsideadultservices.co.uk ('complaint' typed in subject box)

☎ Directors Cheryl Wade 07803612371 or Amy-Jane Farrar 07723059221

📍 Brightside, 1-2 Esther Court, Ashington, NE63 8AP

💬 By raising the concern with any of our staff members, who will record the complaint in writing

When should I make a complaint?

A complaint should be made within 12 months from the date it occurred or when it came to your attention.

This procedure can be made available on request in other languages and in other formats such as audio and Braille.

Complaint Investigation Template

Complaint Reference:			
Name (who does the complaint relate to):		Date of Birth:	
Address:			
Date of Complaint:		Date Complaint Acknowledged:	
Name of Complainant:		Date Response Required by:	
If the complainant is not the Service User, what evidence was provided of the Service User's consent to complain on their behalf?			
Overview of Complaint (append complaint letter or notes of verbal complaint to this form):			

Investigation Plan (outline the planned activities to investigate the complaint):

Findings of Investigation (append interview notes to this form):

Proposed Response:

Approved by:

Response Provided by:

Method (attach any written communication to this form):

Date: