Disability Sheffield

COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

AGREED BY DISABILITY SHEFFIELD BOARD

SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

Disability Sheffield is committed to the 'social approach' to disability, rather than the 'medical approach'. We believe that people with impairments are disabled by the barriers they face in everyday life such as inaccessible communication formats, people's attitudes or inaccessible buildings not by the way their minds and bodies work.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Disability Sheffield is committed to improving the quality of our services and we are always keen to hear what people think about our services and to make sure that you can have your say. We want to provide the best services possible and it is important for us to know what we do well and also what we need to do to improve.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POLICY

THE POLICY

We welcome any comments, suggestions, complaints or general feedback.

How to Comment on Our Services

To comment on our services you can:

- Contact Disability Sheffield on 0114 253 6750 and ask to speak to any of our staff
- E mail us at info@disabilitysheffield.org.uk
- Make comments as a service user when you are invited to complete and return an evaluation form
- Go to our website at www.disabilitysheffield.org.uk and click on the 'Contact Us' button
- Write to us at Disability Sheffield, The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 1FW
- Speak to us through your advocate or representative
- Use any other communication format that works for you

We will respond to your comment and let you know of any action we take.

Who can Complain about Our Services?

Almost anyone can complain - people using our services, people who would like to use our services, their representatives, relatives, members of the public, or staff in other organisations.

Disability Sheffield staff or volunteers cannot complain using this procedure - they must use the staff grievance or volunteer problem solving procedure instead.

What can I Complain about?

We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction about a service we provide or a service we have failed to provide.

Some examples of complaints include:

- Our staff being unhelpful or discourteous
- An inadequate or unsatisfactory service
- A failure to follow policies, rules or procedures
- Discrimination or harassment
- Inaccurate or misleading information
- The speed or efficiency of the service provided
- Whether the service was flexible in meeting your needs

Our equal opportunities policy recognises the need to be proactive in tackling all forms of inequality, discrimination and social exclusion. During the course of our work, particularly as part of our advocacy service we take action to help disabled people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests, obtain services they need and make complaints. This may involve challenging service providers and decision makers on behalf of our service users in order to promote a person centred approach to service provision.

Our staff will carry out this work within the boundaries of their role and abide by our Staff Conduct Policy and Advocacy Code of Practice. We will ensure that service providers have access to information on the scope and limitation of an advocate's role.

Our staff should not feel threatened, compromised or harassed while carrying out their duties. If disputes with another service provider arise staff should bring this to the attention of their line manager at the earliest opportunity.

How We Publicise our Comments and Complaints Procedures

All our Service users will be made aware of their rights to make a complaint. This may involve giving service users a copy of the comments and complaints procedure and explaining the various stages of the procedure at the start and during the course of the relationship.

Staff and volunteers will receive training about the policy and how to deal with comments and complaints as part of their induction and on an ongoing basis

Staff and volunteers will be open to comments, feedback, complaints and suggestions without becoming defensive

The Comments and Complaints procedure will be highlighted on Disability Sheffield's website and will be referred to in newsletters, publicity material and information resources as appropriate.

How to Complain about Our Services

From time to time people using our services will be unhappy with something we have or have not done and they have a right to complain. We think people have the right to complain if they are dissatisfied with the standard of service we provide. We take all complaints seriously and value them as an effective way for us to learn lessons from the complaints we receive.

You can complain by using our Complaints Procedure:

Step One – an Informal Complaint

Discuss the problem first with a member of staff at Disability Sheffield. For example, if your complaint is about the advocacy service then discuss it with one of the advocacy team. They will try to answer your questions and pass your complaint on to a manager.

We will take your complaint seriously and try to resolve or put right the issues you have raised as quickly as possible and within 14 days

Step Two – a Formal Complaint

If you are still unhappy after Step One you can raise the complaint in writing with the Chief Executive .You can use our complaint form if you wish to do so.

Send your complaint in a sealed envelope marked 'confidential' to Disability Sheffield, The Circle, 33, Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 4FW

The Chief Executive will look carefully at your complaint. A trustee may be asked to look at your complaint if it is appropriate to do so. A written reply will be sent to you as soon as possible and within 28 days. If it is not possible to give you a full reply within this time - for instance because a detailed investigation is required – we will keep you informed about what is happening and when you can expect a full reply.

The full reply will include contact details of who to contact next if you believe that your complaint has not been dealt with properly.

We will try to ensure confidentiality as far as possible, but there may be a need to share information with those who need to know about the complaint in order to resolve it. This information will be handled in line with the Data Protection Act

Step Three – a Review

If you are still unhappy following the outcome from stage 2 you can ask for a review of your complaint. The review will be heard by members of Disability Sheffield's Board of Trustees. You will have to write to the Chair of the Board, at Disability Sheffield's address stating why you are dissatisfied with how your complaint has been dealt with.

A meeting will then be arranged for you to talk to two Trustees within 28 days of receipt of your letter. We encourage you to bring someone with you for guidance and support, if you wish.

At this meeting the trustees will look at how your complaint has been investigated and draw up an action plan. The minutes of the meeting and the action plan will be shared with you as soon as possible following the meeting.

The action plan is the final agreement and Disability Sheffield will then consider the matter closed and not open to appeal.

ACCOMPANYING PROCEDURES

1. **Appendix A** Complaint Form

RELATED POLICIES

APPENDIX A.

DISABILITY SHEFFIELD COMPLAINT FORM

YOUR NAME **YOUR ADDRESS** **YOUR CONTACT DETAILS INCLUDING PREFERRED FORM OF CONTACT** (phone number, e mail etc)
IF THERE IS ANYONE SUPPORTING YOU TO MAKE YOUR COMPLAINT DO YOU WANT US TO CONTACT THEM? **YES / NO** (please circle as appropriate) If so please provide their name and contact details below:
DETAILS OF YOUR COMPLAINT (please include as much information as possible to help us investigate your complaint as quickly as possible – you can continue on the back of this form if you need more space)
Signed: Date: