**Home-Start Wyre Forest**

**Complaints Policy and Procedure**

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1. **Philosophy and Basic Principles**

* In line with the Home-Start Agreement, Home-Start Wyre Forest (HSWF) will adopt a formal complaints procedure which will enable service users to make complaints about the service and to have their complaints considered.
* Openness to comments and complaints provides information about the work of HSWF is carried out. It can assist the Scheme in becoming more sensitive to the needs of families and to develop our service in response to this.
* All HSWF staff and volunteers will be sensitive and helpful to families and those acting on their behalf who express a concern.
* Staff and volunteers must advise families who feel they may have been subject to racial discrimination that they have the right to use the provisions of the Race Relations Act. As this has a three month time limit for making applications under the Act there must be no delay in providing this information.
* The Scheme Manager at HSWF is responsible for ensuring the smooth working of the Complaints Procedure.
* The Directors at HSWF are responsible for reviewing this policy and procedure at the agreed review date.

1. **Definition of a complaint**

A complaint in the context of this procedure means;

“the expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided and the wish to have that dissatisfaction recorded and/or considered for improvement of the service and for the removal of dissatisfaction”.

* 1. Relationship with the Grievance, Disciplinary and Managing Allegations Procedures

The Complaints procedure is separate and distinct from the Grievance, Disciplinary and Managing Allegations Procedures. The Grievance Procedure enables employees and Volunteers to raise grievances in connection with their condition of employment and other employment related matters.

The Disciplinary Procedure is used by the employer when an employee may be in breach of the terms of their employment. However, an investigation of a complaint may lead to disciplinary issues.

The Managing Allegations Procedure will be used to address an allegation against a volunteer or employee where concerns have been raised about their behaviour towards children or vulnerable adults.

1. **Informing Service Users of the Policy and Procedure**

All service users will be provided with information on the Complaints procedure when first visited by HSWF (see Appendix 3) . This information will include :

* Confirmation that HSWF has a Complaints Policy and Procedure
* How to raise a complaint
* Who to complain to and how to contact
* What will happen when they have made a complaint.

If HSWF are contracted to provide services for other agencies, these agencies may request their complaints procedure information is included in this guidance. HSWF will ensure any such requests are carried out.

1. **Complaints Procedure**

HSWF operates a three stage Procedure, which must be followed in accordance with this Policy.

* 1. Stage 1
* A complaint must be made in writing, either by letter or on the HSWF Complaints form. Service uses should be assisted, if needed, by the volunteer/Co-ordinator or Scheme Manager to record this. **Staff must not refuse to accept a complaint.**
* The letter or form should be sent or handed in to the HSWF Registered Office.
* On receipt of the complaint the Scheme Manager shall acknowledge receipt and shall send a copy to the Directors. If the complaint is a letter, the Manager will complete a complaints form and attach this to the letter. A record of complaint form should also be started and given the same complaint number.
* The Manager shall consider what steps are appropriate in responding to the complaint : these may involve problem solving, conciliation and or negotiation. The Directors shall be informed of the proposed response and shall agree to it or discuss alternative responses with the Manager. A response to the complainant should be given without delay and the expectation is that this stage should be completed in most cases within 2 weeks.
* The details of the response and the outcome of the way in which the complaint was considered shall be recorded with the written complaint.
* Written responses must be sent in all cases to the complainants. This will outline the further stages in the procedure which can be taken if the response is not satisfactory to the complainant.

**If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome no further action need be taken.**

* 1. Stage 2

If the complainant is not satisfied or wishes from the start when making the written complaint to have it more formally considered, the following shall apply ;

* On receiving a reply to a response that does not satisfy, or on receipt of a written complaint requesting formal consideration the Manager shall acknowledge receipt of the reply and send a copy to the Directors. The date received will be recorded on the Record of Complaint form.
* Directors will elect a member of the Committee who shall further investigate the complaint independently of the Manager and Chair. Depending on the seriousness and nature of the complaint s/he may be joined by a second Committee member.
* A written report of the independent investigation shall be made and recorded with the written complaint. A copy will be sent to the Chair.
* A further response to the complainant shall be drawn up taking into account the report of the investigation and shall be made in writing by the Chair to the complainant.
* If the complainant is satisfied with the result of the investigation and the further response no further action need be taken.

Stage 2 shall be completed within 4 weeks of commencement of the stage.

* 1. Stage 3

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response drawn up after the investigation the following shall apply:

* The continued dissatisfaction of the complainant should be submitted in writing and should be recorded. If sufficient reason for the dissatisfaction is not included in this, more details should be sought from the complainant and recorded.
* A special meeting of the Management Committee should be called, to which the Home-Start UK Regional Consultant shall be invited. The Manager and all Members involved in stage 2 will attend, but in interests of natural justice, shall leave before any decision shall be taken. The Manager will ensure each attendee has a file of all written pages concerning the complaint. This meeting should be chaired by the Vice Chair or another elected member.
* A written response shall be drawn up as a result of any decision taken at the Special Meeting by the person who chaired the meeting and that response shall be recorded with the written complaint and sent to the complainant.
* The Special Meeting shall be called within 4 weeks of the commencement of this stage and the response shall be sent to the complainant within 1 week of the meeting.

This marks the end of the Complaints procedure and if any complainant remains dissatisfied S/he should be informed by the Manager of any other separate procedure which may be appropriate to the case.

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**This Policy was adopted by the Management Committee of Home-Start Wyre Forest on**

Date: 07/09/2023 A screenshot of a cell phone

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### Appendix 1 Complaints form

To be completed by the Complainant.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Home-Start Wyre Forest | Complaint No.: |
| Name and Address of Complainant | If the Complainant is acting on behalf of an adult member of a family please give the name and address of that person |
| Name: | Name: |
| Address, including post code: | Address, including post code: |
| Telephone No.: | Telephone No.: |
| Details of complaint  (continue on a separate sheet if necessary) | |

Signed: Date:

When completed this form should be sent to:

MCF Complex, 60 New Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY10 1AQ………..

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### Appendix 2 Record of complaint

To be completed by the relevant person in the Home-Start scheme (usually the Manager).

| Home-Start Wyre Forest | | Complaint No.: | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name and Address of Complainant |  | | |
| Content of Complaint | | | |
| Unhappy about staff or volunteer’s attitude | | |  |
| Lack of care and attention by staff or volunteers | | |  |
| Racial discrimination | | |  |
| Lack of response to requests or messages | | |  |
| Other (specify) | | |  |
| Stage One | | Dates | |
| Complaint received | |  | |
| Complaint acknowledged | |  | |
| Complaint recorded | |  | |
| Copy to chairperson | |  | |
| Written response sent to Complainant | |  | |
| Stage Two | | Dates (\*or name) | |
| Reply to response received | |  | |
| Reply acknowledged | |  | |
| Reply recorded | |  | |
| Copy to chairperson | |  | |
| Investigation commenced | |  | |
| Name(s) of person(s) investigating complaint | | \* | |
| Investigation completed | |  | |
| Written response sent to Complainant | |  | |
|  | |  | |
| Stage Three | | Date | |
| Written dissatisfaction received | |  | |
| Written dissatisfaction acknowledged | |  | |
| Written dissatisfaction recorded | |  | |
| Copy to chairperson | |  | |
| Special meeting - notices sent | |  | |
| Special meeting - date held | |  | |
| Stage 3 written response sent to Complainant | |  | |

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**Home-Start Wyre Forest**

**Confidentiality, Comments and**

**Complaints**

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**Confidentiality**

All personal information about the parents and children we support is treated as confidential. This information will only be discussed within the staff team in support of the volunteer and to assist the family.

We will not disclose personal details about the family to any other person without the express permission of the parents, unless it is necessary to do so for the welfare and protection of a child. In this case the information will be shared with the appropriate authority.

Home-Start works alongside other agencies and may share general information with these agencies at times. All families are asked to sign a consent form on the initial visit confirming they understand this may happen.

**This confidential relationship is key to the success of Home-Start support, but the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount and there may be times when information will need to be shared in line with our Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policies.**

**Data Protection**

A Family File is maintained during support, containing details of all contact between Home-Start Wyre Forest and the family. These files are kept at the offices in a secure location and can only be accessed by Home-Start Wyre Forest staff. Families can ask to see their file at any time.

Files are archived when support has ceased in line with Data Protection Guidance. **Home-Start Wyre Forest is registered with the Information Commissioner`s Office (ICO) under the Data Protection Act (1998).**

**Comments and Complaints**

If you feel we could improve something about our service, or if you would like to pass on a comment, suggestion or complaint we would like to hear from you. You can :

* Talk to your Co-ordinator who will listen and pass this on to the Manager
* Contact the Manager directly
* Contact the scheme and ask to speak to a Trustee.

**All complaints will be addressed through the Home-Start Wyre Forest Complaints Procedure. Please let us know if you would like to see a copy. We will always let you know the outcome of a complaint.**

**WE ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING THE VERY BEST SERVICE THAT WE CAN. YOUR FEEDBACK CAN HELP US IMPROVE OUR SERVICE FOR EVERY ONE.**

**You can contact the Manager, Belinda Darby, on 01562 825896 or belinda@homestartwyreforest.org.uk**

**You can contact the team at**

**Home-Start Wyre Forest, MCF Complex, 60 New Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY10 1AQ**

**01562 825896** [**homestartwyrefor@btconnect.com**](mailto:homestartwyrefor@btconnect.com)

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**Manager : Belinda Darby**

**Senior Co-ordinator : Donna Scriven**

**Co-ordinator : Joanne Shinton**

**Swap Shop Project Worker: Liz Smith**

**Secretary : Lynda Williams**