

COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The Northern Carers Network will work in a positive way to resolve issues and conflicts affecting Carers, Volunteers and Staff. Carers, Volunteers and Staff will be encouraged to raise concerns in relation to the Network or make comments about the Network. Comments and complaints will be dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without any service being discontinued.

Complaint Definition:

A complaint is when someone is dissatisfied with any aspect of the services provided by the Northern Carers Network Inc.

PROCEDURE

Complaint Handling:

- Carers, Staff and Volunteers may choose the internal or external complaints process and may use an advocate of their choice.
- All complainants will be informed of the option to use an external complaint process and use an independent advocate of their choice.

Internal Complaints Process

1. The internal complaints process is either to approach a staff Member or to approach a member of the Management Committee either verbally or in writing.
2. All complaints re: member of staff, volunteer or carer to be dealt with by the Manager in the first instance.
3. Where the complaint is directed against the Manager the complaint should be in writing to the Chairperson of the Board.
4. Where the complaint relates to the Program/Operation of the Network it shall be directed to the Manager or a delegated Staff person.
5. If the Manager cannot deal with the complaint to satisfaction of all parties then it will be referred to the Board of Management.

(A) Informal Procedure

1. Complainant's confidentiality is maintained throughout the process through involving only those immediately concerned and whom the complainant approves of.

2. All complaints will be investigated.
3. Any informal complaint raised will be responded to where ever possible on the same day, but definitely with in seven working days.
4. The Manager or delegated staff person coordinates the resolution of the complaint in close consultation with the complainant. This may occur in a number of ways.
 - Visit the complainant to listen to their complaint and assess the situation.
 - Consult the other party if applicable.
 - If appropriate, call a meeting between relevant parties and act as a mediator.
 - Complainant will be informed of their right to use a person to speak on their behalf.
5. Once a resolution has been reached, reassess the situation to ensure the complainant is satisfied with the result. Reassure the carer throughout the process of their Rights to services.
6. Should the outcome be unsatisfactory the complainant can appeal in writing to the Board of Management to begin the formal process.

(B) Formal Procedure

1. Any staff/volunteer on receiving a complaint should document nature of the complaint. If they do not feel comfortable in doing that, the complaint should be passed/verbally to the Manager or Chairperson of the Board.
2. All complaints will be documented accurately and investigated.
3. The rights of all parties will be respected and understood if any action is necessary.
4. Complainant will be informed that the matter will be investigated and they will receive a report within seven working days from the time of the complaint.
5. Complainants will be informed of their right to use a person to speak on their behalf.
6. Records will be kept for seven years then destroyed.
7. A complaints Committee nominated from the Board of Management of three (3) people will oversee the process. A member of the committee will contact the complainant to gain feedback on their satisfaction with the outcome of their complaint.

External Process

If concerns are not addressed to the complainant's satisfaction they may wish to use an Independent Advocate Service, or take the complaint to the key funding bodies of the Northern carers Network.

Procedure

Board of Management will assist the complainant by providing contact details.

Publicity

Carers will be provided with access to the Complaints Policy. A copy of this policy will be available in the Carers lounge; Information packs will contain Complaints, Comments & Suggestion and pamphlet

for Carers; Information about making a complaint or to provide feedback will be promoted online and in the 'Pulse of the North' bi-monthly newsletter.

Review

The policy will be reviewed tri-annually or earlier if proven to be necessary.

Quality Assurance

The Northern Carers Network Inc. is committed to providing a quality service. The complaints policy has the capacity to identify issues of concern that will lead to change and improve the service of this organisation.

To ensure that complaints are dealt with according to the philosophy of this organisation all staff/volunteer will be informed of the complaints policy.

All staff/volunteers upon orientation to the Northern Carers Network Inc. will be made aware of the complaints policy and procedure.

Related Documents

Anti Discrimination Act; Disability Services Standards; HACC Nation Common Standards; NCN Future Directions and Priorities for Action;

For more information down load our brochure about complaints