

# · Companions ·

## Complaints/Compliments Procedure

2006/7



# Companions

## Policy Statement

Staff members, Service users, significant others and independent visitors may, from time to time have concerns, comments or even compliments about the way 'Companions' operates.

'Companions' believe that if a person wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. It is the home's policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments are taken seriously.

This policy is not designed to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to provide compensation. It is NOT part of the home's disciplinary policy.

'Companions' believes that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems. 'Companions' supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted between the complainant and the home. If this fails due to either the home or the complainant being dissatisfied with the result the complaint will be referred to the Commission for Social Care Inspection and legal advice will be taken as per necessary.

**In all cases genuine concerns can be raised without the fear of recrimination and in absolute confidence.**

'Companions' adheres fully to Standard 16 – Complaints and Representation of the Children's Homes National Minimum Standards which relates to the degree to which complaints will be addressed without delay and the complainant is kept informed of progress.

## What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, however made, with a specific service or services provided by 'Companions' and not excluded from the procedure.

## Aim

The aim of the home is to ensure that its complaint procedure is properly and effectively implemented, and that service users and staff feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

## Promises

'Companions' promises that:

- ❖ Children, young people, staff, family members, significant others and independent visitors are aware of how to complain, and that the home provides easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints.
- ❖ Every written complaint is acknowledged within three working days, unless acknowledged straight away.
- ❖ All official complaints are responded to in writing.
- ❖ We will consider your complaint and reply within 15 working days.
- ❖ We will keep the complainant fully informed of progress.

# Companions

- ❖ We will maintain and ensure confidentiality at all times.
- ❖ We will explain what considerations have taken/will take place within our reply.
- ❖ Complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause.
- ❖ We will not tolerate and forbid any reprisals against any person making a complaint.
- ❖ Provide information of an Advocacy service

The Registered Manager has the responsibility for responding to and investigating complaints.

'Companions' believes that, wherever possible, complaints are best dealt with on a local level between the complainant and the home. If either of the parties is not satisfied by a local process the case should be referred to the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

The local office is:

Commission for Social Care Inspection  
Dyson Court  
Staffordshire Technology Park,  
Beaconside  
Stafford ST18 0ES

## Complaints Procedure

### Oral Complaints

- ❖ All oral complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, should be taken seriously. There is nothing to be gained by adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- ❖ Members of 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 Registered 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 accept blame, make excuses or blame other staff.
- ❖ If the complaint is being made by an advocate it must first be verified that the person has permission to speak for the complainant, especially if confidential information is involved. If in doubt it should be assumed that the complainant's explicit permission is needed prior to discussing the complaint with the advocate.
- ❖ After talking the problem through, the Registered 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 (i.e. through another meeting or by letter)

# Companions

- ❖ If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant then the member of staff or Registered Manager should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing to the home and give them a copy of the home's complaints procedure.
- ❖ In both cases details of the complaints should be recorded in the complaints book.

## Written Complaints.

- ❖ When a complaint is received in writing it should be passed on to the Registered Manager who should record it in the complaints book and send an acknowledgement letter within 3 working days. The Registered 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 complainant but on the complainant's behalf, then consent of the complainant, preferably in writing, must be obtained.
- ❖ A leaflet detailing the home's procedure should be forwarded to the complainant.
- ❖ If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice will be sought from a legal advisor to the home. If legal action is taken at this stage any investigation by the home under the complaints procedure should cease immediately.
- ❖ If the complainant is not prepared to have the investigation conducted by the home he or she should be advised to contact the Commission for Social Care Inspection and be given the relevant contact details.
- ❖ Immediately on receipt of the complaint the home should launch an investigation and within 15 days the home 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 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 (apologising for what has happened need not be an admission of liability).
- ❖ Such a meeting gives the home the opportunity to show 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 the complainant. This should include details of how to approach the Commission for Social Inspection if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome.
- ❖ The outcomes of the investigation and the meeting should be recorded in the complaints book and any shortcomings in the home's procedures should be identified and acted upon.

## Training

Complaints policy training is included in the induction training for all new staff and in-house training sessions on handling complaints will be conducted at least annually and all relevant staff should attend.

# · Companions ·

## **Documentation**

All complaints reported **MUST** be recorded on a 'Complaints Form' and placed in the correct folder in the locked cabinet in the main office.

All complaints forms must be **retained** and kept **confidential**. The only exception to this is by a request from CISCI and OfSTED.

## Compliments

It is always nice to receive compliments. Compliments may be written on the Compliments/complaints slip. Compliments received will be shared with all staff members.