

VALLEY HOUSE **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

We very much hope that you are satisfied with the service provided by Valley House.

Complaints and suggestions are taken seriously and we hope that you will let us know if you are not satisfied with any aspect of the Valley House service.

Below is our procedure for anyone wishing to make a complaint. If you want to discuss any aspect of this procedure, please contact a staff member.

INTRODUCTION.

This policy and procedure is founded upon the following key principles. That:

- I. A complaints procedure should be available to all.
- II. The system must be relevant and meaningful and wherever possible enable a speedy resolution to be achieved.
- III. Valley House stresses the importance of such a system in its day-to-day work.
- IV. By providing the right framework in order to make a complaint Valley House is enabling those that come into contact with it to ask for redress or effect positive change. The best outcomes are achieved through open discussion and sometimes, an acknowledgement that mistakes have been made.
- V. Valley House recognises that making a complaint can be difficult and stressful for the complainant and that they may need support in doing so.
- VI. A properly founded and enacted complaints and representation procedure is one measure of Valley house's adherence to best practice.

THE THREE STAGES OF THE COMPLAINT

1. PROBLEM SOLVING STAGE
2. FORMAL INVESTIGATION AND REGISTRATIONS STAGE
3. THE REVIEW STAGE

AT EACH STAGE OF THE COMPLAINT, IF THE COMPLAINANT DOES NOT RESPOND TO CORRESPONDENCE OR ATTEND ARRANGED MEETINGS WITHIN 28 DAYS IT WILL BE ASSUMED THAT THE COMPLAINANT DOES NOT WISH TO CONTINUE WITH THE COMPLAINT. HOWEVER THE AGENCY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE THE ISSUE IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE.

Problem Solving Stage (Stage 1)

- A. Any staff or Board of Trustees member may receive a complaint.
- B. It should be recorded on the complaints form and the Director of Operations informed. Steps should then be taken to resolve the complaint by the Manager of the service to which the complaint relates, unless the complaint specifically relates to that person, in which case it should be referred to the Director of Operations for resolution. This will involve speaking to the complainant about his or her concerns and desired outcomes and expectations.
- C. If a complaint is made about a staff member the staff members' line manager should be informed immediately.
- D. This stage must be resolved within 14 days of receipt of the complaint

Where the complaint has not be resolved the complainant can request to move to the next stage.

Formal Investigation and Registration (Stage 2)

- A. The appropriate Line Manager will review the steps already taken and inform the Director of Operations of the situation, and the proposed action.
- B. The Director of Operations will respond to the complainant by meeting them and discussing the issue or by arranging for another person, not involved in the direct management of the service complained about, to meet the complainant and to discuss the issue.
- C. The complainant may be accompanied by an independent person for support.
- D. The investigator will also contact others within Valley House about the issues raised in order to establish the facts and draw conclusions.

The investigator will submit a report to the Chief Executive Officer with conclusions and any recommendations for action. The Chief Executive Officer will have 7 days to decide how to respond to recommendations and will notify the complainant of his/her decision within 28 days of the Stage 2 complaint being initiated.

Complainant can ask for Stage 3 review within 14 days

The Review Stage (Stage 3)

- A. Within 14 days of stage 2 being finalised the complainant should make a request to the Management Committee to further the action.
- B. A review panel will convene consisting of two members of the Board of Trustees.
- C. The complainant should be present at this review and may bring an independent person for support and the investigating officer should also be present.
- D. It will be the aim of the panel to meet within 10 days of receiving the request from the complainant.
- E. The Panel's remit is to consider whether the investigation is fair and sufficiently thorough or whether further work is required. The panel should reach the decision within 24 hours and inform the Chief Executive Officer and complainant.
- F. The panel's decision is advisory but the Chair's decision is final.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- I. It is the aim of Valley House to support and encourage all residents and users of its service to make statements on that service received, whether positive or negative.
- II. It is further our aim that no person that comes into contact with the project will be oppressed or discriminated in any way.
- III. Valley House recognises that discrimination and oppression can take many forms, not only gender, sexuality, ethnicity, but also through religious and political beliefs for example. Valley House will challenge discrimination and oppression in all instances to ensure the best possible service to its clients and community.
- IV. The staff member receiving the complaint should not insist that the complainant place it in writing. It may be appropriate for the staff member to be dictated to. If the complainant agrees with what is read back to them then they should be asked to sign it.
- V. That at all stages the complainant should be encouraged to find an advocate/representative should they so wish.

VI. The Director of Operations / Chief Executive Officer may choose to deviate from the complaints procedure should the complaint be about a staff member, and the issue be more appropriately dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

VII. Such alternate steps may be immediately required re: 2(A) if the complaint is about the Director of Operations / Chief Executive Officer. In this context the Board of Trustees Chair should be contacted immediately.

RECORDING PROCEDURE

Individual complaints will be recorded onto a 'complaints form' by the Director of Operations. The complaint will then be handed to the appropriate Manager for further action.

FEEDBACK

Comments, compliments and complaints or suggestions in relation to the project's services are encouraged and a leaflet is available and accessible to all for this purpose. Leaflets can be obtained in our Reception area or by requesting a copy in person, by telephone, in writing or by emailing info@valleyhouse.org.uk

Leaflets received will be collated annually to inform the Valley House's review of overall performance/service standards for that year.

Approved by the Management Committee on: 18th July 2017

Signed J Briffitt.....

Position Chair