

Procedure for Reporting Complaints at RYSE Supportive Services

Introduction: At RYSE Supportive Services, we recognize and respect the right of our staff, youths, and their relatives, as well as care team members and volunteers, to voice their complaints and concerns regarding the services we provide. We view complaints not as criticisms, but as valuable opportunities to learn, adapt, improve, and enhance our services.

Purpose of the Policy: This policy is crafted to ensure that all complaints and comments are addressed properly and seriously. It is focused not on assigning blame, considering negligence, or providing compensation, but rather on understanding and resolving concerns constructively. This approach aligns with our commitment to maintaining a positive and responsive service environment.

Aim of the Complaints Procedure: The primary goal of our complaints procedure is to implement it effectively and ensure that individuals making complaints feel that their concerns are heard and addressed in a timely and fair manner.

Key Objectives:

1. **Awareness and Accessibility:** Ensure that youths, staff, the care team, and relatives are fully aware of how to lodge complaints. We strive to provide accessible and user-friendly channels for registering complaints.
2. **Responsibility and Administration:** A designated person, typically within the management or HR department, is assigned the responsibility for administering the complaints procedure, ensuring consistency and accountability.
3. **Timeliness in Acknowledgment and Response:**
 - All serious or written complaints are acknowledged within 2 days of receipt.
 - An investigation into the complaint commences within 2 days of acknowledgment.
 - Responses to all complaints are issued in writing within 1 day of completing the investigation.
4. **Sensitivity and Fairness:** All complaints are handled promptly, fairly, and sensitively, with due consideration given to the potential distress and concerns of the complainant.

Responsibilities:

- **Managers' Role:** Managers at RYSE Supportive Services bear the responsibility of ensuring that complaints are addressed according to the stipulated procedures. They play a crucial role in overseeing the complaint resolution process and ensuring compliance with our standards of service.

Implementation of the Procedure:

1. **Receipt of Complaints:** Complaints can be made through various channels and are directed to the appropriate manager or HR representative.
2. **Initial Review and Acknowledgment:** Upon receipt, each complaint is reviewed to understand its nature and acknowledged as per the timeline.
3. **Investigation Process:** A thorough and fair investigation is conducted, respecting the privacy and dignity of all involved parties.
4. **Resolution and Follow-up:** The outcome of the investigation is communicated, and any necessary follow-up actions are taken to address the root cause of the complaint and prevent recurrence.

Procedure for Handling Verbal Complaints

Introduction: At RYSE Supportive Services, we recognize the importance of appropriately addressing verbal complaints. This procedure ensures that such complaints are handled with professionalism, empathy, and efficiency, in line with our organizational values and standards.

1. Acknowledgment of Complaints:

- All verbal complaints are taken seriously. Staff are trained to understand the significance of these complaints and the impact they may have.

2. Immediate Problem-Solving Efforts:

- Staff receiving a verbal complaint are expected to attempt an immediate resolution. This approach demonstrates our commitment to prompt and effective complaint handling.

3. Escalation to Team Leader:

- If immediate resolution is not possible, staff are instructed to promptly refer the matter to their Team Leader. This ensures that the complaint is addressed by someone with the appropriate authority and expertise.

4. Professional Conduct with Complainants:

- Staff are expected to maintain politeness, courtesy, sympathy, and professionalism at all times. A defensive or aggressive attitude is discouraged, as it is counterproductive to resolving the issue.

5. Maintaining Calm and Respectful Interaction:

- In all interactions regarding the complaint, staff are encouraged to remain calm and respectful. This attitude helps in diffusing any tension and facilitates a more constructive dialogue.

6. Non-Admission of Blame:

- Staff are advised not to accept blame, make excuses, or blame other staff members. The focus should remain on understanding and addressing the complaint rather than on attributing fault.

7. Verification of Advocate Authority:

- In cases where the complaint is made by an advocate on behalf of a youth, staff must verify that the advocate is authorized to speak for the youth. This is particularly crucial when confidential information is involved. Youth's explicit permission is sought before discussing the complaint with the advocate.

8. Suggesting a Resolution Plan:

- After discussing the issue, the staff member or manager will propose a resolution plan. If the plan is acceptable, an agreement will be clarified with the complainant, and a method for communicating the outcomes will be established (e.g., follow-up meeting, email).

9. Written Complaints for Unresolved Issues:

- If the resolution plan is not acceptable, the complainant is encouraged to submit their complaint in writing. They will be provided with a copy of the company's complaints procedure to guide them in this process.

10. Documentation of Complaints:

- Details of all verbal complaints, whether resolved or escalated to a written form, are meticulously recorded in the Complaints file within the Human Resources department. This record-keeping is essential for transparency and continuous improvement of our services.

Serious or Written Complaints Procedure

Introduction: At RYSE Supportive Services, we are committed to a robust, fair, and transparent process for addressing serious or written complaints. This procedure is designed to ensure compliance with best practices in human resources and to prioritize the safety and well-being of all individuals, especially youths in our care.

1. Receipt and Recording of Complaints:

- **Channels of Receipt:** Complaints can be received verbally (in person, via telephone), or in written form (email, text message). Management is tasked with promptly forwarding these to the HR department.
- **Documentation:** The HR department meticulously records each complaint, utilizing the workplace investigation report template. This documentation includes all pertinent details as per the standardized format.

2. Notification and Initial Investigation:

- **Initial Contact:** Involved parties are notified by telephone, followed by an email detailing the complaint and investigation process if they are unreachable.
- **Information Gathering:** During initial contact, we seek to understand the nature of the complaint and request the involved parties' accounts and any relevant evidence. If the complaint pertains to serious allegations affecting the health and safety of youths, immediate suspension of the implicated staff is enforced pending investigation.

3. Investigation Process:

- **Conducting the Investigation:** The investigation is led by the HR manager, alongside an upper management member (Services Manager or COO), ensuring impartiality. External investigators may be involved as per ministry requests.
- **Interviews and Confidentiality:** Interviews are conducted with all relevant parties. Recording of these interviews is subject to consent, with consideration for the potential stress involved. Confidentiality is strictly maintained throughout the process.
- **Timeline:** The investigation is structured in two stages: an initial call for preliminary information, followed by a more detailed follow-up. If a conclusion cannot be

reached within two days, extensions up to 3-5 working days are communicated to all parties.

4. Resolution and Communication:

- **Findings Communication:** The outcomes of the investigation are communicated via email to the involved adults. Youths receive a personal call and a meeting for debriefing to minimize any negative impact.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** The detailed investigation report is shared with the complainant and the accused, excluding specific youth details for their protection.
- **Action on Findings:** In cases where complaints are substantiated, immediate termination is effected with a detailed explanation and an offer to review any new exonerating evidence. Regular policy reviews and staff training follow.

5. Documentation and Reporting:

- **Formal Record-Keeping:** The investigation process and findings are formally documented using the designated template.
- **External Reporting:** In cases involving child welfare concerns, relevant findings are shared with the overseeing ministry, complemented by direct communication from the COO.

All staff receive training in dealing with and responding to verbal, written or serious complaints. The complaints policy and procedures are included in new staff members' induction training. In order to learn from mistakes, staff meetings are used to check knowledge of complaint handling and to discuss formal complaint issues in order that all staff can share and learn from the experiences.

