

Addictions Support & Counselling (ASC) – Forth Valley

Confidential

Complaints Procedures 16 April 2012

ASC aims to provide high quality services for people affected by substance misuse and we endeavour to do that at all times. However, sometimes we do not always get things right and we want to learn from our mistakes so that we can improve our performance. One way to do that is for us to have a complaints procedure that is accessible, simple to use and is fair.

1. We understand that a complaint can be defined in several ways and our definition is as follows;

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the standard of a service, action or lack of action by ASC's staff, volunteers or management that affects an individual or group of service users or their carers.

This definition covers situations where someone believes that we have

- done something wrong
 - failed to do something that we should have done
 - provided services to a poor standard
 - acted unfairly, unethically or discourteously
2. Anyone who wishes to complain should be given our complaint leaflet that advises on how to complain and explains our procedure.
 3. Our complaints procedure can be used by anyone who is using, or has used, or is planning to use any of our services. We can also accept complaints from people who are directly affected by someone using our services.
 4. Our complaints procedure is not open to ASC staff and volunteers and if any employee or volunteer wishes to complain then he or she can use our grievance procedures.
 5. We would usually not consider any complaint unless it has been raised within six months of an alleged incident of dissatisfaction occurring.
 6. Complex complaints can be considered as complaints involving large numbers of people or several alleged incidents occurring over time.
 7. Our Board of Directors have the final say in adjudicating whether a complaint is considered to be vexatious.

8. The complaints process is in three stages;
 - Stage One a complainant speaks informally to the staff/volunteer member concerned
 - Stage Two the complainant makes a formal complaint to the Chief Executive
 - Stage Three the complainant appeals to the Board of Directors
9. In the case of complaints about the Chief Executive complainants will be advised to write to the Board of Directors.
10. When making a complaint complainants should be encourage to say or write clearly and briefly about
 - what went wrong
 - when and where it happened
 - who was involved
 - what they are seeking from the complaint
11. Upon receiving a complaint the Chief Executive should acknowledge it in writing within five working days and he/she will investigate the complaint. Following the investigation the Chief Executive will write to the complainant explaining the outcome of the investigations and if necessary arrange to meet the complainant. Complainants will also be advised of what further action they may be able to take.
12. At Stage Three complainants must write to or e-mail the Chairperson of the Board of Directors care of our main office and he or she will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within ten working days. The Chairperson will investigate the complaint or arrange for a complaints panel to be formed that will investigate the complaint. The Chairperson will write to the complainant explaining the outcome of the complaint.
13. In assessing complaints there are four main outcomes
 - Complaint is fully upheld
 - Complaint is partially upheld
 - Complaint is not upheld – there is no corroborating evidence to support or dismiss the complaint and that information provided is hearsay
 - Complaint is dismissed – complainant fails to evidence the complaint or that there is corroborating evidence that negates the complaint

14. Following the issuing of a complaints resolution letter at Stage Two the complainant will be advised of his or her right to move to Stage Three – consideration by the Board. Depending on the nature of the complaint there are other regulatory and commissioning bodies that the Board might consider as being appropriate to assist the complainant.
15. The Chief Executive will maintain a register of complaints that will be reported to the Board and purchasing agencies as and when required and as a minimum once a year.
16. Staff and volunteers will be briefed on the complaints procedure and it will be part of the induction process for new staff and volunteers.

17. Draft Complaint Leaflet

The tag line will be: If something goes wrong, we want to know. The leaflet will carry our logo and OSCR and Companies House registration numbers and our main office address. The proposed wording of the leaflet is as follows.

18. Have we:

- done something wrong?
- failed to do something that we should have done?
- provided services to a poor standard?
- acted unfairly, unethically or impolitely?

19. What you can do

You can make a complaint if you use or have used or are planning to use our services. You can also complain if you are directly affected by someone using our services. If you have a concern, you can speak informally to the staff or volunteers concerned

If that doesn't work, or if you don't feel comfortable about doing this then you can make a formal complaint. To do that you should contact Paul Mooney our Chief Executive.

Paul Mooney
Chief Executive
Addictions Support & Counselling (ASC) – Forth Valley
32 Vicar Street
Falkirk
FK1 1JB

Phone: 01324 874 969
Email: chiefexec@asc.me.uk

20. You should say clearly and briefly

- What went wrong
- When and where it happened
- Who was involved
- What you want from your complaint

21. What happens next?

When we receive your complaint Paul Mooney will acknowledge it in five working days. He will investigate your complaint and contact you with the outcome of the investigations and he will also tell you about what further action you can take.

22. If you are not happy

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint or your complaint is about the Chief Executive then you should write to the Chairperson of our Board care of our main office. You will receive an acknowledgement within ten working days.