



Policy and Procedures Complaints

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Wetherby in Support of the Elderly (WiSE) recognises that 'Friends', Volunteers and other parties who have direct contact with WiSE may wish to make a complaint and that a confidential complaints procedure that is accessible to all is vital.

WiSE has a positive view of complaints, welcoming them as a contribution towards improvement and service development and takes all complaints and feedback seriously as we strive to deliver a support service to our 'Friends' and constantly work to make improvements and develop the service in line with needs.

Our highest priorities are the wellbeing of our 'Friends', volunteers and staff.

Complaints need to be dealt with promptly by the charity within specified timescales.

- 1.2 Our complaints procedure is open to:

- Anyone who is receiving a service from us
- Anyone who has received a service from us
- Any agency or person that refers to WiSE
- Volunteers
- Applicants
- Local residents
- Any other organisation with a concern

- 1.3 Complaints from paid workers will be treated separately under the Grievance Policy and Procedure.

2. Definition

- 2.1 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction where the party making the complaint feels there is due cause to raise the issue. Where there is a direct complaint about a member of Staff and or Trustee then the Whistle Blowing Policy may be more appropriate.

3. Confidentiality

- 3.1 All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence by WiSE and the complainant should also uphold confidentiality.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Informal Complaints Procedure

If you are not happy with anything to do with WiSE please raise any concerns informally by voicing concerns to the Operations Manager.

The complaint should be notified to the Operations Manager within 5 working days of the incident happening.

If this cannot be done within the above time scale there should be justifiable reason as to why there is a delay.

While we would wish to resolve most complaints informally through discussion with us, we acknowledge that in some instances the outcome of such discussions will not be to your satisfaction. We consider the formal complaints procedure to be a useful tool to develop and improve our service to you. Complaints can also help us to identify problems and act upon them to prevent them getting worse. Any changes made as a result of a complaint will be communicated to you as soon as possible.

4.2 Formal Complaints Procedure

Formal complaints must be made in writing to the Operations Manager. If the complaint is about the Operations Manager, please write to the Chair of Trustees. If you need assistance you will be referred to a support service.

The complaint should be notified to the Operations Manager within 5 working days of the incident happening.

If this cannot be done within the above time scale there should be justifiable reason as to why there is a delay.

The complaint will be acknowledged within three working days of its receipt.

Within ten working days you will receive a written response to your complaint from WiSE. This response will indicate what action has or will be taken to resolve the complaint. If this is not possible then an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered and a full response will be made within a further ten working days. A copy of the complaint and our response will be sent to the Chair of Trustees.

If you are dissatisfied with the response then you can appeal to the Chair of Trustees (or another named Trustee, if the Chair received the initial complaint), who will consider the appeal with at least one other member of the Trustee Board.

The appeal will be acknowledged within three working days of its receipt.

Within four weeks you will receive a full written response to your appeal. The outcomes detailed in this letter will be considered WiSE's final response to the complaint.

If you still feel that the matter has not been dealt with correctly then you will be advised to take the complaint to the appropriate external body. i.e. The Charity Commission

Every effort will be made to keep to timescales during this process, but if there are unavoidable reasons why timescales need to be longer, you will be informed of this, and given information as to when you will receive a full response.

5. Advocate

- 5.1 If you would like an independent advocate to support you in making a complaint or to make a complaint on your behalf you can contact the local Citizen's Advice Bureau on 0344 411 1444

6. Complaints made about volunteers

- 6.1 If a complaint is made about a volunteer, the Operations Manager will discuss this with the volunteer and give them an opportunity to respond and work out the next steps to resolve the situation.

If this doesn't resolve the situation then a 'formal letter' will be sent to the volunteer. A further opportunity to discuss with the Operations Manager will be given.

If the complaint results in asking the volunteer to leave the organisation the volunteer has the right to appeal to the Chair of Trustees who will make the final decision.

7. Guidance for workers on handling complaints

- 7.1 We will operate the complaints procedure in a 'blame free' manner. The focus will be on resolving the issue and satisfying you, not on pointing the finger and apportioning blame. We will show you that we are prepared to listen to you and take you seriously. We will keep you informed about the progress of the complaint, time-scales for a response and inform you of the outcome as soon as possible.

8. Frivolous, Malicious and Vexatious Complaints

- 8.1 WiSE is committed to dealing fairly with everybody involved with or interested in the organisation ensuring we provide high quality services, and a clear, and timely response when they contact us. The WiSE Complaints Policy & Procedure is enforced to ensure that this is the case.

However, in certain cases people may pursue their complaints in a way that is unreasonable. They may behave unacceptably, or be unreasonably persistent in their contacts and submission of information. These actions can occur either while their complaint is being investigated, or when the complaint investigation is finished.

Single incidents may be unacceptable in themselves, but more often the difficulty is caused by unreasonably persistent behaviour that is time consuming to manage and interferes with proper consideration of the complaint.

WiSE will implement the Frivolous, Malicious and Vexatious Complaints Policy & Procedure where the nature or frequency of the complainant contacts, impede the organisation's consideration of their or other people's, complaints or otherwise disproportionately impact on the operational capacity of the organisation.

9. Monitoring

- 9.1 A central file for logging formal complaints will be maintained by the Operations Manager. This will record details of the complaint, action taken, dates, and list any supporting documents associated with the complaint. Complaints will be kept separate from any notes on 'Friends'. Professional advisors including the Accountant and insurers will be given on request information on the number of complaints each year. The log will be made available annually and a report made by Trustees.

10. Related Policies

This policy links to:

Whistle Blowing Policy
Safeguarding Adults Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Confidentiality Policy