

## **Shared Lives South West's feedback and complaints policy.**

### **1. Principles**

Anyone to whom we offer a service, or work with in any way has a right to raise concerns about the conduct and performance of our staff, or our Shared Lives carers or about the quality of our services and have them addressed by an appropriate person within Shared Lives South West

We aim to ensure that all complaints are dealt with objectively and with sensitivity, in a timely, transparent, constructive manner.

How to make a complaint

### **2. Informal complaints**

A complaint is treated as informal when it is raised verbally with a member of staff of Shared Lives South West but the complainant does not wish to put the complaint in writing and/or does not wish to be informed about any actions taken.

All informal complaints about our services or staff should normally be directed to the relevant service manager. Where an informal complaint is made direct to an employee, the employee will record this and ensure that the relevant service manager is made aware of the comment/complaint.

Whenever an informal complaint is made, the complainant will be told that they can complain formally if they wish and where appropriate they will be encouraged to discuss the matter directly with the employee, carer or person most directly relevant.

The service manager will agree what action is to be taken to resolve the issue. Where any action is required, the complaint should be logged on the Shared Lives South West complaints database.

### **3. Anonymous complaints**

These will be treated as informal complaints and logged on the Shared Lives South West complaints database.

### **4. Formal complaints**

A formal complaint is any complaint made in writing and/or where the complainant wishes to be informed of any investigation/actions taken.

Where a formal complaint is received about the practice, action or conduct of a member of Shared Lives South West staff or a Shared Lives carer this will usually be dealt with by the relevant service manager or the employees line manager. The complaint will be acknowledged within three working days and logged on the Shared Lives South West complaints database.

The trustee with responsibility for complaints should be informed by email. If the complaint is about a senior manager this will be dealt with by the chief executive. If the complaint is about the chief executive, this will be dealt with by the trustee responsible for complaints.

## **5. How we will respond to the complaint**

### **Step 1 Discussion**

In the first instance, the manager will discuss the matter with the complainant and wherever possible see if it can be resolved quickly and simply. It may be appropriate to ask the complainant to discuss the matter directly with an employee or Shared Lives carer. Where the complainant does not wish to do this or has already taken this step but does not feel it has resolved the matter, the line manager would proceed to step 2.

### **Step 2 Investigation**

If following discussion the complainant does not feel the matter to be resolved and/or raises further concerns the line manager will

- Discuss the matter further with the complainant (either over the phone or in person), clarifying the exact action, practice or conduct they remain unsatisfied with, identifying why they feel the matter is not resolved and ensuring that there is no misinformation or misunderstanding.
- Investigate the matter fully with the employee or Shared Lives carer and any other relevant party to ascertain their views on the matter and draw together any facts
- Agree a formal plan of action with both parties to resolve the matter, with a timescale for review. This will be communicated in writing to both parties.
- Communicate with the complainant about the matter and any actions to be taken, apologising if appropriate.
- All actions agreed should be logged on the complaints database.
- All formal complaints will be reviewed by the management team, in order to improve our service.

This step should take no longer than 10 working days. Where it may take longer, the complainant should be kept informed at regular intervals.

Where this does not resolve the matter, step 3 will be followed

### **Step 3          Review**

Where the complainant feels that their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved or has not been satisfactorily investigated, they can ask the chief executive of Shared Lives South West to review the matter.

The chief executive will work with the trustee responsible for complaints to review the complaint, how it was investigated and any actions taken as a result. They will communicate with the complainant suggesting any further action, if required.

If the complaint is about a senior manager, and has been investigated by the chief executive, any review would be undertaken by the trustee responsible for complaints. If the complaint is about the chief executive, and has been dealt with by the trustee responsible for complaints, any review would be undertaken by the chair of the board of trustees.

## **6. Outcomes of complaints**

The outcome of any complaint will vary depending on the nature of the complaint.

Where a complaint is received about the behaviour of a Shared Lives carer or the quality of a service provided, Shared Lives South West is required to also follow the requirements of the Safeguarding Adults policy for that location and the complaints processes required by the Care Quality Commission with whom we are registered.

This may trigger a safeguarding investigation which will always take priority over our own internal complaints processes. However, once any safeguarding issues have been investigated and any action taken, Shared Lives South West will then ensure that its own complaints process is concluded.

Where the complaint is about a member of staff, this may trigger an internal disciplinary procedure.

All complaints and the outcomes will be reported regularly to the board of trustees of Shared Lives South West.

## **7. Further steps**

If the complainant still feels that Shared Lives South West has not treated them fairly or not done what we reasonably could, then they may take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) and ask for it to be reviewed. The LGO



provides a free, independent service. To contact the LGO, telephone 03000610614 or email [advice@lgo.org.uk](mailto:advice@lgo.org.uk) or visit [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk).

The LGO will not usually investigate a complaint until Shared Lives South West has had the opportunity to respond and resolve matters.

Shared Lives South West is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). CQC cannot get involved in individual complaints about providers but is happy to receive information about our services at any time. The CQC can be contacted at:

Care Quality Commission National Correspondence  
Citygate  
Gallowgate  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE1 4PA

Telephone: 03000616161  
[www.cqc.org.uk/contactus.cfm](http://www.cqc.org.uk/contactus.cfm)