

FAMILY MEDIATION CYMRU

Policy & Procedure Manual

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Policy & Procedure Number: 2.4

Procedure prepared by:

Date:

Procedure authorised by:

Date:

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FMC : Complaints Procedure

Policy

It is the policy of the Service to pursue a strategy of continual improvement in the service it provides and to welcome suggestions as to how this may be achieved, or constructive criticism about services or their delivery.

Where a client or other agency indicates any expression of dissatisfaction with the service received it is the policy of this Service to investigate the complaint and where possible resolve all issues.

PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

- a) This procedure describes the informal and formal stage to be followed when a client or other agency indicates any dissatisfaction with the service provided.
- b) The Service is aware that dissatisfaction with the service may be presented in different ways such as in writing, over the phone or by e-mail. Staff are to be alert to possible complaints however presented.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) It is the responsibility of the Service Manager to administer this complaints procedure.
- b) It is the responsibility of the enquiry officers/administrators or other member of staff undertaking their duties to draw to the attention of the Service Manager any complaints received by post, telephone, e-mail or one to one.
- c) It is the responsibility of mediators and counsellors to be alert to complaints and deal with them as appropriate and in line with this policy.
- d) It is the responsibility of the Service Manager to involve the Trustees of the Service as outlined below.
- e) It is the responsibility of all involved with a complainant to keep a record of the complaint, detailing how it was dealt with. They will also keep a copy of all records and replies to clients showing how the complaint was resolved. All these records will be kept in the central Complaints Log held in the Manager's office files. The following will be recorded:
 - Name of complainant
 - Date of notification
 - Nature of complaint
 - How investigated

- Outcome
 - Any action taken
 - How and when the outcome was notified to the complainant
 - Any response from the complainant following notification of outcome
- f) It is the responsibility of the mediator to advise potential mediation clients of the complaints procedure in their initial letter inviting them to attend mediation sessions.
- g) Complaints about the content of mediation discussions cannot be investigated. Any such complaint should, however, be listened to and acknowledged, whilst explaining to the complainant the boundaries of the mediation process and the limits of the complaints process.

3. INFORMAL STAGE

- a) Initially, the complainant will be encouraged to discuss their concern with the member of staff who is involved in their case. This is most likely to be a mediator. Mediators may seek support from the manager or appropriate professional practice supervisor(s) in dealing with any complaint.
- b) If it is not appropriate to speak to this individual, or if the complainant prefers to do so, they should be asked to write or to speak to the Manager.
- c) Any complaint with respect to the Service Manager will be referred to the Chair of the Trustees.
- d) The member of staff involved in the issue will try to resolve the matter informally.
- e) The person who receives a complaint will advise the complainant of the complaints procedure of the Service. A copy of the leaflet describing the procedure is attached as Appendix 1. This leaflet is designed to be handed to or sent to the complainant or any other individual requesting information on the procedure.
- f) If the complaint is not resolved informally the staff member will ensure the Manager is informed of this unresolved complaint.

4. FORMAL STAGE 1

- a) This procedure will be followed if the complaint cannot be settled informally.
- b) The complainant must be asked to put their complaint in writing and send it to the Manager.
- c) The Manager will clarify what the complaint is about, and who is the most appropriate person to investigate and respond.
- d) A letter of acknowledgement of the complaint will normally be sent within 48 hours of it being received and telling the complainant when they will receive a more substantive response.
- e) On receiving the complaint the Manager must investigate without delay and respond to the complainant within 14 days. Members of staff involved will be informed and must assist in the investigation when required, in order to establish the cause of the

problem. The Manager will normally deal with operational issues, but with practice issues he/she may seek help from the appropriate Professional Practice Supervisor.

- f) Complainants will be advised of any unforeseen delays.
- g) The Manager is responsible for preparing a written report on the incident.
- h) The Manager must notify the Chairman of the Trustees, who will assist in evaluation of the incident and the preparation of a response to the complainant.
- i) The complainant must be informed by the manager, generally in writing, of what has been found and what steps will/have been taken.
- j) During the investigation the Manager should consider the need for additional support for any member of staff directly involved.

5. FORMAL STAGE 2

- a. If the matter cannot be resolved by the Formal Stage 1 of this procedure then the following Formal stage 2 will be followed.
- b. The Chairman of the Trustees will set up a committee comprising two trustees and an independent person.
- c. The complainant will be invited to explain their view to this committee who will decide any further action that should be taken to resolve the complaint.
- d. The complainant and staff members involved in procedures above will all be notified simultaneously of the outcome. This will generally be in writing or e-mail.

6. ANNUAL ANALYSIS AND REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

Within two months of the end of each year the Manager will analyse the complaints for the previous twelve months and present the information to the trustees at the next trustees meeting. Results of this annual review will be documented in the minutes of the trustees meeting.

APPENDIX 1

FAMILY MEDIATION CYMRU

Complaints Procedure

**7, Guildford Street
Cardiff
CF10 2HL**

Family Mediation Cymru *Complaints Procedure*

We are continually developing our service and always welcome suggestions for ways in which we can improve it. If you think that the service you have received is unsatisfactory, we would prefer to know.

This leaflet explains how you can make a complaint and what will follow.

We hope that most complaints can be resolved informally and that users will be able to sort out the matter without the need to make a formal complaint.

The first step is to discuss your concern with the member of staff who is involved with your situation.

You can also speak to the Service Manager who will try to resolve it informally.

If the matter cannot be settled informally, you should put your complaint in writing and send it to the Manager who will investigate it and respond within 14 days. He/She will formally notify the Chair of the Trustees who will decide what course of action will be taken. Your complaint will be fully looked into and you will be told what we have found and what steps are being taken.

We hope that this will effectively sort out any problems as quickly as possible.

However, if at that stage we cannot resolve the problem you will have the right to explain your view to a committee, which will comprise two trustees and an independent person.

You can contact the Service Manager for further advice at:

Family Mediation Cymru
7, Guildford Street
Cardiff
CF10 2HL

Tel: 02920 229692

Fax: 02920 399505

E-mail: admin@familymediationcardiff.co.uk