

## **Community Action Hampshire – trading as Action Hampshire and Action Portsmouth**

### **Complaints Policy**

*All references to Action Hampshire in this document should be deemed to cover and include Action Portsmouth.*

*Please note this policy does not cover complaints on employment. These are covered by the Grievance Procedure in the Staff Handbook.*

#### **General Principles**

Action Hampshire is committed to providing a high quality service for its members and users, within the resources available. Action Hampshire is also committed to responding well to complaints from any member or service user. We believe that our users should have their views taken into account and receive a satisfactory level of service.

Action Hampshire wishes to be responsive to complaints and considers them a valuable form of feedback. A complaint is an opinion or comment from a user of Action Hampshire's services, about a service that they are unhappy or dissatisfied with.

Complaints from staff about personnel matters are not covered by this Complaints Policy.

Action Hampshire will follow a standard procedure to achieve consistency in how it deals with complaints. Complaints will be investigated in a systematic and comprehensive manner.

Action Hampshire will collect information on any complaints it receives in order to monitor user satisfaction, and to register any ISO non-conformance issues. This will enable Action Hampshire to consider changes to procedures and/or further training and support to staff that may be required.

All correspondence, reports or other papers relevant to complaints will be allocated a sequential number and retained on file for as long as is necessary.

## **Objectives of this Complaints Policy**

Action Hampshire will ensure that its complaints system:

- is easily accessible and understandable;
- provides an effective means of allowing service users or their representatives to complain about the quality or nature of services offered by Action Hampshire
- is independent - all Stage 3 investigations will be carried out by individual(s) not directly connected with the complaint<sup>1</sup>;
- thoroughly and fairly investigates complaints within set time-scales;
- keeps complainants informed of progress;
- provides an effective response and appropriate redress;
- provides feedback to management so that areas of dissatisfaction can be improved;
- gives the Board of Action Hampshire an additional means of monitoring performance and the extent to which service/development plan objectives are being achieved;
- is fully understood by all staff.

In addition, Action Hampshire will ensure that its complaints system is confidential:

- the identity of the person making a complaint will be made known only to those who need to consider the complaint;
- it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example where relevant legislation applies or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

## **Making a Complaint**

In order to be as flexible as possible Action Hampshire is prepared to accept a complaint made to the relevant staff in the following formats:

- In person
- By telephone
- By letter
- By email

For contact details, please see <http://actionhampshire.org/contact>

Individual staff email addresses can be found at <http://actionhampshire.org/about/action-hampshire-staff>

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<sup>1</sup> Investigation levels/stages are outlined on page 3

## **The Complaints Policy has three levels:**

- **First level / stage 1**

Many complaints can be dealt with quickly and satisfactorily at this stage. Initially the user will discuss the matter with the staff member involved in delivering the service. The staff member will at the outset try to determine what outcome the user is seeking and will ensure that all steps are taken to resolve the complaint at the first point of contact.

The staff member will endeavour to find a satisfactory solution and will keep their line manager informed of the complaint and outcome.

At the end of stage 1, complainants will be told that if they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they can invoke Stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

- **Second level / stage 2**

Stage 2 is initiated by contacting the Chief Executive of Action Hampshire in writing (letter, fax or email).

The Chief Executive will investigate the matter and will normally give a full written reply within ten working days of receiving the complaint.

In the event of a complaint concerning the Chief Executive then the Chairman of the Board will receive the complaint.

At the end of stage 2, complainants will be told that if they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they may have the matter reviewed by a panel elected from the Board (stage 3).

- **Third level – stage 3**

If the complaint has not been settled to the satisfaction of the user at stage 2 the user should request the matter be reviewed by a panel of the Board.

The panel will consist of three people who will review the complaint and previous decision of the Chief Executive. The Panel will be convened by the Chairman of Action Hampshire (or a Trustee appointed by the Chairman) who will make the necessary arrangements to assemble the panel and provide the appropriate background information and personnel in order to come to its decision. Wherever possible, the panel will be convened within 15 working days of the request for a review being communicated. The panel will endeavour to provide their decision in writing to the user within 5 days of their decision.

## **COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS**

Users of Action Hampshire's services are also extremely welcome to submit comments and compliments about the service they have received.

Compliments will be acknowledged and may be published as a model for developing good practice.