

# COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS PROCEDURE

## Introduction

All Staff, Service Users, Carers, Trustees and The Public have the right to complain, compliment or comment about our service and have this thoroughly and fairly investigated. We believe that having an effective complaints system helps us to understand how our service is perceived from our others' points of view. It also helps us monitor quality issues and inform any future decisions we take regarding our service.

The purpose of the following statement of procedure is to define the process by which Dost will respond to any complaints.

## Procedure

[NOTE: This section should be read in conjunction with the [Complaints Flowchart in Appendix 4.](#)]

Staff **MUST** inform the YWPM of **ALL** complaints from themselves, Service Users and The Public.

[see [Appendix 1](#) for further guidance]

When responding to verbal complaints, the following details need to be noted:

- Identify the name and contact details of the complainant
- Obtain any information necessary to understand the nature of the complaint
- Ensure that the [Complaints Form](#) is completed [see [Appendix 2](#)]
- Pass the completed complaints form to the YWPM or Trustees as soon as possible

When responding to written complaints:

- Ensure that the [Complaints Form](#) is completed as above (attaching the written complaint to the Form)
- Pass this to the YWPM or Trustees as soon as possible

The YWPM is then responsible for receiving these complaints and ensuring that action is taken in a timely manner.

There will be the option of making a complaint, compliment or comment on the Dost website and this will be forwarded to the YWPM to investigate and deal with as below.

When investigating complaints, the YWPM should always try to actively listen to what the complainant has to say, rather than arguing with them or trying to 'pass the buck'.



The YWPM should ensure they take the following steps:

- Record the initial details of the complaint on the Dost Complaints Register. This Register is held by the YWPM [see 'Monitoring' section below for further information].
- Meet with the complainant in order to give them a chance to discuss their feelings about the issues prompting their complaint, to outline how the Dost complaints process works, and explain what they can expect to happen next
- Establish as many of the 'facts' of the situation as is reasonably possible. This may involve a review of documentary evidence, interviewing Staff, requesting reports from Staff, as well as interviewing other relevant parties
- Meet with the complainant and all other appropriate parties in order to discuss and agree an appropriate action plan based on the above investigation. If necessary, an interpreter will be found to ensure the complainant is able to be understood and can understand
- Produce a written report outlining the conclusions of the investigation
- Notify the complainant in writing of the outcome of the investigation
- Record the outcome of the complaint on the Complaints Register

### **Investigating a Complaint**

If the complaint is about, or in any material way involves, the YWPM, then the YWPM must inform the Trustees of this fact. The Trustees will then decide whether it is appropriate for the YWPM to investigate the complaint and, if not, will decide who will be responsible for investigating the complaint in line with the steps set out above.

### **Appeals Procedure**

Should the complainant remain dissatisfied by the outcome of the complaint, the YWPM must refer the matter to the Trustees for appeal.

The Trustees must then convene in order to decide whether a formal Appeal Hearing is required.

### **Monitoring**

All complaints made by Service Users will be noted on the Complaints Register held by the YWPM which allows Dost to monitor:

- the number and nature of complaints received
- how these were dealt with
- any issues raised by these complaints
- all actions taken to provide better services
- the effectiveness of the Complaints Policy and Procedures.



## Appendix 1

### Guidance for Dealing with Complaints

Most people complain because they have a problem, not because they enjoy complaining.

They may have an idea of what their problem is, but it is up to Staff to find out exactly:

- a) What the complainant perceives as the problem.
- b) What the actual problem is (which may be different from the perceived problem).

Most importantly, listen to the person and acknowledge what they are saying. You may be able to tell what the actual problem is within a few seconds - but remember that the person 'owns' the problem and has a right to be heard.

Remember, something which may seem trivial to you, may feel catastrophic to the complainant.

Firstly, find out the nature of the problem as they see it – at this stage, much of the discussion may be about emotions and there might not be much information about the actual problem.

Secondly, identify the actual problem accurately. This entails listening to the person and asking them relevant questions in order to clarify in what way Dost has failed to meet their expectations or needs (see guidelines below).

When a person comes to you with a complaint:

- Identify yourself, tell the person your name and offer to help. **NEVER** say 'it's not my job' **NEVER** get into an argument with the person – instead, acknowledge their concern
- Don't tell them what you can't do, maintain the focus on what you **CAN** do
- Ask for the facts, check that you understand the problem – but take care not to interrupt them or jump to conclusions before they have finished
- Avoid technical/ professional jargon
- Finally, **DO NOT** make promises unless you are sure that you can keep them

Clarify the problem with the following questions:

- Ask the person making the complaint to specify exactly what the problem is
- Identify the background information to the problem
- Find out what the present situation is
- Explore the scale of the problem - do others have the same problem, even though they have not complained?
- Find out what the complainant wants to achieve from reporting this problem
- Check your own contribution to the problem; What role are you playing in it? Are you helping or hindering the situation? (Remember: try not to be defensive)
- Examine all the pieces - does the person feel that you understand what the problem is?

Once all this information has been gathered, forward the details to the YWPM who will contact the complainant within 7 working days.



## Appendix 4

### Complaints Flowchart

