

## **Complaints Policy**

It is the Policy of St Chads Communication Centre Trust to foster an environment of open and constructive dialogue that will facilitate the resolution of any complaints and allow for learning for the organisation through the complaints process.

We will do this by:

- providing clear guidelines for expressing concerns or making complaints connected with the organisation
- having appropriate processes in place to ensure that all complaints are investigated and dealt with seriously, fairly, confidentially and in a timely manner
- seeing complaints not as a negative event, but as an opportunity for learning by the organisation
- following the guidelines in the Code of Disability Rights
- providing protection for protected disclosures

This Policy is for the benefit of service users and their natural and paid supports as well as volunteers and other stakeholders who do not otherwise have a legislated complaints process. It is also for the benefit of employees in the situation of protected disclosures only as other complaints are covered by employment legislation.

The General Manager is responsible for ensuring this Policy is adhered to and any non-compliance with this Policy may be included in performance and appraisal processes at the discretion of the Board Chairperson

### **Guidelines:**

1. Wherever possible, complaints should be resolved informally and in discussion with the relevant parties.
2. It is noted that due to the nature of our service, concerns and queries are brought regularly by stakeholders. The General Manager is to use their discretion regarding if a matter is brought as a concern or is to be escalated to a complaint
3. This policy does not relate to employment agreement issues which are covered in a separate statutory process
4. Complaints are to be seen as an opportunity to identify potential areas of improvement rather than being negative feedback and this aspect is to be considered and commented on in investigations
5. The complaints policy and procedure will be made available to anyone who requests it.
6. Information on how to make a complaint will be provided to all service users and their family/whanau/caregivers
7. The Privacy Act will apply to any investigations
8. The Board are to be aware of all complaints and the outcome of investigations in a timely manner
9. Protection through the complaints process is assured to complaints of serious wrongdoing covered by the Protected Disclosures Act

### **Process**

1. All complaints and outcomes will be handled in the first instance by the General Manager (or in the event that the complainant wishes to make a complaint against the General Manager, then to the Board Chairperson). Complaints may be made verbally; in this case the General Manager shall record the complaint in writing and attach any written material provided by the complainant. The complainant is to be given a copy of the Complaints Process including how to contact the Board Chairperson if desired
2. The General Manager shall check with the complainant that what is recorded is an accurate record of their complaint. If possible, the complainant should sign the record.
3. The General Manager shall investigate the complaint and provide information and outcomes to both the complainant and the Board. In the instance of a serious complaint, the Board Chairperson should be informed as soon as practicable
4. All complaints and their subsequent investigation will be recorded in a complaints register and kept in a central lockable file in the General Managers' office.

5. All new and prospective clients / families/whanau/caregivers to St Chads will receive as part of the enrolment process, information about how to make a complaint. The Health and Disability Code shall be followed where the complaint relates to a service user. They shall;
  - Be made aware of their rights to an independent advocate or support person to be present at any discussion related to the complaint
  - Be made aware of the procedure of the complaint
  - Receive all relevant information about the complaint
  - Be informed about the outcomes of the investigation
6. A cross reference to the complaint shall be placed in the file of those involved where relevant. None of the detail of the case shall be stored in personnel files, only the cross reference.
7. A summary of complaints and their associated investigation shall be included in the monthly report to the Board of Trustees
8. Disclosures under the Protected Disclosures Act for the reporting of serious wrongdoing will be treated confidentially within the standard complaints process in the first instance, with other remedies being available to the complainant under the Act should these not be responded to in accordance with the Act

This policy supersedes all earlier versions of the Complaints Policy

**Supporting Documents:**

HDC Brochure  
 Enrolment Form  
 'Welcome to St Chads' brochure  
 Procedures for dealing with complaints  
 Protected Disclosures Act 2000  
 Privacy Act 1993  
 Health and Safety Policy

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**PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

