



**ARC**

ALLIANCE RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

# COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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# COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Alliance Recruitment Consultants Limited complaints policy and procedures are there to support all levels from the employees to family, friends and managers. All complaints made are completely confidential and they will be recorded on a Complaints form that will register the complaint and track its progress and a record held in the Central Complaints Log. ARC has a service committed to deal with complaints within the management team swiftly and in an appropriate manner

## COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS, COMMENTS & COMPLIMENTS

With respect to staff members feedback concerning the quality of care services provided this information is formally reviewed for content and possible action. These reviews classify staff members feedback as follows, and is considered as positive through to negative feedback:

### TYPES OF FEEDBACK

**COMPLIMENTS** - positive input regarding aspects of the recruitment Service

**COMMENTS** - still positive, but possible scope for improvement

**CONCERNS** - negative feedback where action may be required to address a Problem

**COMPLAINTS** - serious concerns on the part of the staff member, requiring formal action as described below:

A complaint should normally be made where all other reasonable methods of resolving the dissatisfaction have been tried -and failed or where the complainant believes their word fail

A complaint may be about:

- The lack of service.
- Being refused a service, including an assessment,
- The quality of a service.
- The attitudes or behaviour of staff.
- Decisions made by staff.
- Delays in dealing with problems or in providing a service.

There is a formal process for the management and handling of complaints from staff/family/friends/managers. The complaints policy provides for appropriate investigation and a timely response to the complainant, and if required the means for the staff member to take the complaint to the appropriate regulatory authorities. This is explained in the Welcome Pack and is also made aware of the right to complain prior to finalizing the recruitment service contract.



## **INFORMING THE COMPLAINANT ABOUT THE COMPLAINT'S PROCEDURE**

Staff members will be informed about the Complaints Procedure in a variety of ways, including the Welcome Pack given to them before or upon admission. This must be in a format that the Staff Member can understand. This must include the name, address, and telephone number of the Regulatory Authority in the area where the office is based. Other relevant organisation and persons details should also be included.

Managers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff members feel comfortable with the making of comments or complaints, they are enabled to make a complaint or representation and are free from reprisals if they choose to do.

Complainants should be given any reasonable assistance they require or request, including being advised that they may ask someone else to make the complaint on their behalf.

They will also be given information and contacts details of Advocates they may contact, who may make complaints or advocate of their behalf or assist them in doing

The complainant must be advised that if they choose to complain directly to the Placing Authority, the Placing Authority must provide information and assistance.

Adult complainants (i.e. the staff members and the Placing Authority) must be given a copy of the complaint's procedure. This complaints procedure is available to all persons working in the Office.

If they request it or it appears appropriate, they should be given information on additional advocacy or support networks which may help them use the procedures effectively; this should include providing contact details.

## **MAKING A COMPLAINT**

If you wish to complain about the service, you receive from us then you should follow the steps below:

- If possible, the problem should be discussed with the person providing the service or your line manager who will do his / her best to resolve the problem quickly.
- If you feel unable to discuss the problem with your line manager or you feel they are unable to solve the problem, then you should contact a director.
- If possible, at this stage you should record your complaint in writing and send it to ARC. You may wish to ask a friend or relative to write out the complaint for you, which if possible, you should sign.
- If you are not happy about making the complaint yourself and you do not know someone who is prepared to talk to us on your behalf, we will be happy to find someone from an independent organisation to act as an advocate for you.
- If we receive a written complaint it may take a little time to consider it fully, but we will write to you within one week to acknowledge receipt of the complaint and to inform you of the steps we are taking to resolve it.



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- If no immediate solution is found we will investigate the complaint fully, contacting those concerned. We will then write to you within a further 3 weeks with details of our findings, any action we have taken, and proposals to resolve your complaint.
- If at any stage in the proceedings, you feel your complaint has not been dealt with you can as a last resort contact the Director.
- It is the policy of the Organisation to strive to ensure that compliments outweigh complaints.

ARC ensures that its entire staff are highly skilled and are trained in identifying abuse situations and providing a service that safeguards protection of staff members. We employ in-depth policies which all our staff members are aware of and practice and follow the steps to take if they have any concerns regarding possible abuse situations. However, if you are concerned about such a situation your first step is to contact the line manager who will instigate the company's abuse procedure.

If at any stage in the proceedings, you feel your complaint has not been dealt with you can contact:

### **THE OFFICE:**

The address of ARC Regional Office which is responsible for handling your complaint is:

Address: 42, Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 2RA

### **GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

ARC has an identified complaint manager for the company, this person will investigate each complaint and is suitable seniority to resolve the issues raised in the complaint.

Arrangements need to be in place to communicate with complainants by both letter and email.

The complaint procedure is:

- On our website.
- clearly visible in the foyer of the office;
- and sent out with all contracts for care.

### **CHECKLIST FOR ADJUSTING YOUR WRITTEN PROCEDURE**

A complaint may be made by telephone, in person, in writing or by email (if possible).

Should be given full contact details for complainants to use in the procedure, including an email address.

Where a complaint is made in person or on the telephone, we must tell them we will:

- Make a written copy of the complaint



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- Provide a copy of the written record within three working days.

All complaints will be acknowledged within three working days and in the acknowledgement, letter give the name of the person who will investigate.

There is a 12 month-time limit for complaints to be accepted and investigated.

All complaints will be investigated by a person with enough seniority to resolve the issues.

Complainants will receive:

- assistance to enable them to understand the complaint procedure, and
- advice on where they may obtain such assistance.

ARC will only accept complaints from a representative under certain conditions

Either where we know that the staff member has consented, either verbally or in writing or where the staff member cannot complain unaided and cannot give consent because they lack capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, **and** the representative is acting in the staff member's best interests.

We will keep the complainant informed about the progress of the investigation. The expected turnaround time is 28 working days.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **LOCAL RESOLUTIONS (STAGE 1)**

#### **TIMESCALE: 14 DAYS**

If possible, the person receiving the complaint, or their supervisor/line manager should resolve the matter as soon and in any event within 14 days. This may be extended for a further 14 days with the agreement of the complainant.

This assumes that the person receiving the complaint has the delegated authority to resolve the matter satisfactorily.

If not, that the person can immediately pass the matter to a supervisor or Line Manager with an appropriate level of authority to resolve the matter satisfactorily.

If it is possible to resolve a complaint within 14 days, the person resolving it should do the following:

- Note the fact that a complaint was made and resolved in the home's Daily record a summary of the complaint and the manner in which it was resolved in the Complaints



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Log and in the Daily Record of any relevant staff member. The Line Manager must confirm in writing to the complainant the agreed resolution.

- If the Line Manager was not involved in resolving the matter, notify the Line Manager as soon as practicable.

## **FORMAL CONSIDERATION (STAGE 2)**

The manager should then consult the complainant to ensure they are satisfied, brief their Line Manager if necessary and sign off the Complaints Log.

### **TIMESCALE: 28 DAYS**

**NOTE:** Any serious complaints must be notified to Placing Authorities and the Regulatory Authority, who may wish to advise or be consulted about the formal process.

Where the person receiving the complaint cannot resolve it within 14 days, or a further 14 days if agreed by the complainant, it should be referred, for Formal Consideration, to the Responsible Individual.

Before undertaking the Formal Consideration, the Responsible Individual should clarify the substance of it with the complainant, put it into writing and give a copy to the complainant.

If the complaint relates to a child in the home, the social worker should be consulted.

The Responsible Individual should attempt to resolve it as quickly as possible but within 28 days of the request for the Formal Consideration. This may be extended with the agreement of the complainant. If the complaint has not been resolved within 28 days, the Regulatory Authority must be informed of the reason for the delay.

The complainant should be notified of the outcome of the complaint, preferably verbally, but always in writing. If the complaint was justified, the complainant should be told what, if any, remedial action will be taken, and an apology offered.

Details of the outcome must be recorded in the Complaints which must be countersigned by the Service Manager. Copies of all records and correspondence relating to the complaint should be kept as follows:

- On any relevant Staff Member's file;
- In the Complaints File held by the Service Manager.
- Copy of outcome must be sent to the Regulatory Authority.
- Copy of outcome must be sent to the Placing Authority.

## **REVIEW PANEL (STAGE 3)**

### **TIMESCALE: 28 DAYS**

If dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 2 Formal Investigation, complainants may request a **STAGE 3: Review Panel** to consider their complaint, they may also ask that their complaint be passed to the Placing Authority or Regulatory Authority.



To instigate a Stage 3 Review Panel, the complainant should notify the Responsible Individual either verbally or in writing, the notification will be confirmed in writing explaining the process and timescales for undertaking a Stage 3 Review Panel.

The Responsible Individual will ensure that:

- a. Senior managers and relevant support workers are notified and briefed as necessary until the matter is resolved.
- b. The complainant's clear about the process and timescales.
- c. The complainant has access to an independent advocate or representative.
- d. A Review Panel is established to consider the matter; the Review Panel will consist of 3 people that are independent of the matter being considered, one of the Panel members will be asked to Chair the Panel and report to the Responsible individual on the recommendations that are made,
- e. Necessary arrangements are made for the Panel to be convened and conducted in a fair manner.
- f. The recommendations of the Panel are properly considered, Senior Managers as necessary, and that any decisions or actions are acted upon promptly.
- g. The complainant and his/her advocate/representative are briefed verbally and in writing of the outcome.

## **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **MONITORING**

The staff member will record the complaint on a Complaints form to be held on the staff member's file along with the outcome and request that the complainant endorses the recording

and writes any comments that are applicable on the reverse of the form, the recording must then be shared with the manager and a copy placed in their case file in order that analysis of complaint and any appropriate changes can be monitored.

### **ANNUAL REPORTS**

We will prepare an annual report for each year in which it must:

- specify the number of complaints received
- specify the number of complaints that we decided were well-founded, partly, or fully
- specify the number of complaints that has been informed have been referred to other bodies
- give the subject matter of complaints received

A 'year' means a period of 12 months ending 31 March.

Annual complaint report is available to anyone on request.



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LETTERS**

The acknowledgement letter should include an offer to discuss the complaint with the complainant at a mutually agreed time, to go over:

- the way the complaint is to be handled, and
- the period ('the response period') within which the investigation of the complaint is likely to be completed.

The acknowledgement can be sent by letter or email.

## **THE FINAL RESPONSE LETTER**

The final response letter must include a report giving:

- a detailed explanation of how the complaint has been considered
- the conclusions reached, including any remedial action needed, and
- confirmation that any action needed has either already been taken or, if not yet taken, the proposed timescale when such action will be completed.

The letter must inform complainants of their right to take their complaint to the Local Government if they are not happy with the outcome.

The final letter should be signed by the 'responsible individual' or sent by email in their name.

If the response is not ready within six months, you must:

notify the complainant in writing accordingly and explain the reason why, and send the complainant in writing a response in accordance with the above as soon as reasonably practicable after six months.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION FOR STAFF MANAGING COMPLAINTS**

### **PEOPLE WHO CAN COMPLAIN**

A complaint may be made by:

- someone who received or has received care services
- someone who is affected (or likely to be affected) by the action, omission or decision of the provider who is the subject of the complaint, or
- a representative of either of these, under certain conditions.

If we are not satisfied that the representative is acting with the young person's consent or in their best interests, we must notify the representative in writing, and state the reason for its decision.

### **COMPLAINTS YOU DO NOT HAVE TO INVESTIGATE.**

We are not required to investigate the following complaints:



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- a complaint by an employee relating to their employment (you should handle this in a different way, for example through your grievance procedure)
- a complaint that was made in person or by telephone and is resolved to the complainant's satisfaction no later than the next working day after the day the complaint was made, and a complaint that has already been investigated and resolved.

In these circumstances, ARC must, as soon as reasonably practicable, notify the complainant in writing of its decision not to investigate the complaint and the reasons why. It would be best practice to have a standard letter for this purpose.

## **DUTY TO CO-OPERATE**

If a complaint involves more than one provider/commissioner of services, there is a duty on local authorities and the NHS to co-operate and provide a single response. Every provider must work with primary care trusts (PCTs) or local authorities to provide a single response to complainants.

Arrangements need to be in place to agree who should take the lead in coordinating the handling of the complaint, communicating with the complainant, providing information that is reasonable requested, and attending any meeting reasonable required.

Sometimes the service provider will take this lead and other occasions it may be more appropriate for the OCT or local authority to do so.

