

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Contents

Introduction	1
Stage One: Internal Complaints Process: Verbal Complaint.....	1
Stage Two: Internal Complaints Process: Written Complaint.....	2
Stage Three: Independent Complaints Reviewer: Appeal	2
Stage Four: External Complaints Reviewer.....	2

Introduction

Next Steps (Living, Dying, Grieving) Mental Health and Wellbeing Service (henceforth referred to as Next Steps) is committed to providing a high-quality service to all our clients. To do this we actively seek feedback from clients, trainees, members of the public, partner organizations, and personnel (paid staff and volunteers).

Next Steps acknowledges that there may be occasions when people may be dissatisfied with the service they have received. In these circumstances the person concerned will be made aware of the Complaints Policy.

As part of this commitment, it is the responsibility of all personnel, directors, and executive staff to raise awareness of the existence of the Complaints Policy and Procedure. This ensures that when individuals are dissatisfied with the work of Next Steps, they are aware of their right to complain.

If you have a complaint regarding our individual counselling, group support or training workshops, we invite you to follow our organisation's complaints procedure which is set out below. All our Mental Health Practitioners are either self-employed or in training under close supervision. For complaints about a mental health practitioner please follow their individual complaints procedure.

Stage One: Internal Complaints Process: Verbal Complaint

It may be possible to resolve a complaint by discussing it with the person concerned. You should raise your concerns within 7 days of the incident in question. Your Mental Health Practitioner, Group Facilitator or Workshop Leader will either fully investigate your concerns and address them accordingly, or request that you put your complaint in writing. If your complaint cannot be dealt with by the Practitioner, Group Facilitator or Workshop Leader,

then the written complaint will be passed to our Administrative Director who will oversee and deal with the complaint on behalf of Next Steps. If you should feel unable to discuss your complaint with your Practitioner, Group Facilitator or Workshop Leader then your complaint will go straight to stage 2.

Stage Two: Internal Complaints Process: Written Complaint

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One, or you feel Stage One is inappropriate in respect of your complaint or if you are no longer attending counselling, group therapy, or training, please put your complaint in writing within 21 days of the incident and send to:

Company Secretary, Next Steps (Living, Dying, Grieving) c/o Kingsbridge Care Hub, Ilbert Road, Kingsbridge, Devon, TQ7 1DZ

The Company Secretary will send acknowledgement of receipt of the written complaint. Your concerns will be fully investigated, and the Company Secretary may contact you directly for further information if required. A response will be sent to you within 28 working days.

Stage Three: Independent Complaints Reviewer: Appeal

If you feel that your complaint has not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner you can appeal the decision. An appeal must be made in writing within 14 days of receipt of the outcome of the complaint. The appeal must clearly state your reasons for appealing. The appeal will be assessed by our Independent Complaints Reviewer and an outcome to your appeal will be sent within 28 days of receipt of the appeal. Written appeals should be sent to:

Karl Gregory at karlgregory1@virginmedia.com

Stage Four: External Complaints Reviewer.

Next Steps is an organisational member of the National Counselling Society (NCS). If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you are advised to submit your complaint and the reasons for your dissatisfaction in writing to the National Counselling Society. At this stage you will need to follow the NCS complaints procedure.

Please note that the NCS can only hear complaints on receipt of evidence that all the stages of Next Steps' complaints procedure have been completed.

The National Counselling Society, 19 Grafton Road, Worthing, West Sussex. BN11 1QT