



Whole Again Communities Complaints & Grievance Policy

Amended May 2019 to be reviewed May 2020

Policy Statement

Whole Again Communities (WAC) aims to be a learning organisation with a friendly and inclusive ethos. We want to find out what we are doing well and what we can work at to do better – so that we can improve our work in the future. We welcome feedback from our volunteers, staff and service users. Praise and criticism are both useful, so please let us have your comments and suggestions.

If you are puzzled or concerned by the way you feel you have been treated by us, you should ask for an explanation. We would hope to resolve any problems you may have before you decide whether to make a complaint.

However, you may make a complaint about any aspect of our service regardless of whether you have asked for an explanation first.

As an Equal Opportunities organisation, we aim to treat everyone on their merits – irrespective of age, disability or impairment, race, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, sexuality, dependents or class. If you believe we may have discriminated against you on such grounds, we would be very concerned and would welcome the chance to investigate your complaint thoroughly.

Policy Information

This policy applies to complaints made about **WAC** from staff, volunteers and service users.

Openness:

- Complaints will be fully investigated and recorded, all parties kept informed and the procedure publicised.
- Any member of staff referred to will be given the chance to comment or answer criticisms.
- Complaints about staff may lead to action under **WACs** disciplinary procedures.

Confidentiality

- The complainant may remain anonymous.
- If this is likely to limit the ability to follow up the complaint, the complainant will be told this and given assurances that any information they give will only be used for the purpose it is given for and not shared with anyone else without their permission

Support for Complainants

- Complainants will if required be offered information about how to get support from an independent source in putting their complaint e.g. Gaddum (0161 214 3939: advocacy @gaddumcentre.co.uk
- They will also have the chance to bring an informal supporter (but not a legal advisor) to any meetings that are arranged regarding the complaint, as long as all people due to attend the meeting are informed of the name and position (if any) of the complainant's supporter, and have no objections.

Grievance Procedure

The procedure has the following stages:

1st Stage – Informal Discussion

- This will normally be between the complainant and the CEO.
- It will attempt to establish that the complainant has a grievance, what this is and if possible to find a resolution to it that all involved find acceptable.
- The first stage should take place as soon as possible and within no more than a week of the complainant raising the matter.
- If a complaint is made against the CEO this will be taken to a Board member for resolution at Board level

2nd Stage – Formal Complaint

- If not satisfied, the complainant can register a formal complaint either verbally or in writing.
- If the complaint is regarding a member of staff or a volunteer, it will be investigated using the disciplinary procedure. If the complaint relates to **WAC** then it will be investigated by a member not involved in any aspect of the complaint.
- If this is not possible, then an independent investigation will be carried out (see 3rd stage of process)

3rd Stage - Independent Investigation

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal phase an independent adjudicator acceptable to both sides will be asked to investigate.
- A timetable for investigation will be agreed with the adjudicator, findings will be reported in writing to the parties involved and the decision of the adjudicator will be considered as final.
- The adjudicator should make recommendations about the outcomes of the complaint, which should be kept to unless there are exceptional circumstances to take into account.

Recording Complaints

All complaints will be recorded. The record will include:

- the date of the complaint
- the complainant's name and address (unless they wish to remain anonymous)
- The form of it (i.e. verbal or in writing)
- Who within WAC received the complaint
- The details of the complaint
- What action was taken
- By whom
- To what timetable

Monitoring Complaints

The CEO will report annually to the **WAC** board on any complaints received during the year and what action was taken about them. Policies and Procedures will be reviewed if necessary in the light of any complaints.