



# COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

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## Policy Control/Monitoring

<b>Approved by: (Position in Organisation)</b>	Director of Corporate Services
<b>Date:</b>	March 2024
<b>Accountability: (Position in Organisation)</b>	Corporate Quality Manager
<b>Revision Cycle:</b>	Every two years.
<b>Brief details of amendments made</b>	Process Flowchart removed

## Equality Impact Assessment

This document forms part of Percy Hedley's commitment to create a positive culture of respect for all staff and service users. The intention is to identify, remove or minimise discriminatory practice in relation to the protected characteristics (race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religious or other belief, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity), as well as to promote positive practice and value the diversity of all individuals and communities.

As part of its development this document and its impact on equality has been analysed and no detriment identified.

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# Version Control Tracker

Version Number	Date
1	April 2018
2	May 2019
3	June 2020
4	January 2021
5	March 2023
6	March 2024

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## **1. Introduction**

We always aim to provide a high standard of care in all our services. Our service users' views and the views of their families are important to us and help to ensure our services are consistently meeting people's needs. We therefore like to hear from anyone with compliments, suggestions, or concerns so we continue to learn and ensure our services improve. If you are unhappy with any of our services, it is important that you let us know. Where concerns are raised, we aim to resolve these as quickly as possible and ensure

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## 5. Principles

### **Sharing a compliment**

Please share positive experiences with us and tell us when we have exceeded expectations. It would be ideal to speak to the Manager of the service or their Deputy as soon as possible, complete one of our feedback postcards located in our Residential Services or use the email address [\*\*comments@percyhedley.org.uk\*\*](mailto:comments@percyhedley.org.uk), which is managed centrally and shared with the local services as appropriate.

### **Making a suggestion or comment**

Often people feel more comfortable about suggesting improvements rather than complaining formally. Anyone receiving services, and their friends/family, may make a suggestion or comment. You can speak to the Head or Manager of the service or their Deputy, complete one of our feedback postcards located in our Residential Services, use our suggestion boxes or if you would rather make your suggestion electronically, by using the email address [\*\*comments@percyhedley.org.uk\*\*](mailto:comments@percyhedley.org.uk). This email address is centrally managed, suggestions will be forwarded to the specific service area as necessary.

### **Making a complaint**

We aim to handle complaints quickly, effectively and in a fair and honest way. We take all complaints seriously and use valuable information from investigating to help us improve the service we provide. Feedback is important to help us raise standards and all parties should feel that any concern can be voiced and taken seriously. We treat all complaints in confidence.

The Percy Hedley Foundation assures service users and their families that it will not withdraw or reduce services because someone makes a complaint in good faith.

The complaints procedure will:

- Encourage resolution by informal means
- Be easily accessible and publicised
- Be simple to understand and use
- Be impartial and non- confrontational
- Ensure a full and fair investigation of the issues raised
- Respect confidentiality
- Ensure swift responses within time limits
- Feed into senior leadership discussions and quality monitoring processes

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process. It is important to ensure that earlier stages of the process and steps to resolve the complaint have been exhausted.

## **Anonymous complaints**

We deal with anonymous complaints under the same procedure; however, it is better if you can provide contact details so we can tell you the outcome of our investigation.

## **Responsibility**

The service Leadership Team (Registered Manager, Deputy Head Teacher of school, or Duty Principal of college) would normally be the first point of contact for dealing with all complaints (Stage 1) made about their service and they should seek to solve the problem immediately wherever possible.

If a complaint is directly related to the individual Registered Manager, Head Teacher of school, or Principal of college, refer to section 5 (*How we handle complaints*) of this policy which outlines the escalation process to the relevant Service Director/Chief Executive.

## **How we handle complaints**

### ***Informal Complaints or resolving concerns (Stage 1)***

Most issues and complaints can successfully be dealt with informally and it enables us to respond as early as possible and we encourage this approach.

An informal complaint is an approach by an individual or on behalf of an individual to a member of that specific services' leadership team/registered manager, expressing dissatisfaction with some aspect of the service, its action or inaction. Informal complaints, however made, are complaints which are usually resolved quickly and simply and do not involve detailed or lengthy investigation.

If the complaint is justified, this will result in an apology, an explanation, an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or an assurance that the incident will not reoccur.

A response should be provided within a maximum of ten working days from the date the complaint/concerns was received. If we are unable to respond within the timescale, we will explain any reasons for the delay.

Anyone making an informal complaint will be given information regarding follow-up procedures, in the event that they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their initial complaint/concern and wish to take the matter further through the formal complaints process. Managers may also choose to escalate the complaint at any time.

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## **Formal Complaints (Stage 2)**

A complaint becomes formal when the person remains dissatisfied after making an informal complaint/concern or, alternatively, when from the outset, a complaint cannot be dealt with simply and quickly and requires investigation.

The formal complaint should be sent in writing marked 'Formal Complaint' to the specific services' senior manager (Head of Service/Head Teacher/College Principal), providing instruction on the preferred method of response (i.e. phone call, email, etc).

A written acknowledgement (Appendix 2) of the complaint will be provided within two working days, with a target date of 15 working days to provide a response.

If it is not possible to resolve matters in this timescale an explanation will be given with revised dates. The Senior Manager scheduled to hear the complaint will appoint the most appropriate independent person to undertake an investigation into the complaint. The findings of this investigation will be made available to the Senior Manager prior to hearing the formal complaint.

When a complaint becomes formal, care will be taken to:

- Clarify the complaint.
- Clarify the outcome sought.
- Give the complainant the name of the person dealing with the complaint.
- If the complaint is being made on behalf of an individual by a representative it must first be verified that the person has permission to speak on behalf of the individual, especially if confidential information is involved. This **MUST** be done in writing, with confirmation of the representative's identity and relation to the individual.  
It is very easy to assume that the representative has the right or power to act on behalf of an individual when they may not. If in doubt, it should be assumed that the individuals' explicit permission is needed prior to discussing the complaint with the advocate.
- Check whether the complainant needs support of any kind to understand the investigation procedure.
- Monitor the progress of the complaint by the involvement of a suitable Senior Manager of the Percy Hedley Foundation.
- Provide a full response in the agreed medium within 15 working days or, where this is not possible, send a preliminary reply indicating progress to date and an estimate of time to make a full response.
- When we have finished investigating, we will arrange to meet with you to discuss the outcome and/or write to you with:
  - Ø details of the findings;
  - Ø any action we have taken; and
  - Ø our proposals to resolve your complaint.

At this arranged meeting, the complainant should be advised that they may, if they wish, bring a friend, relative or a representative such as an advocate.

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- Advise the complainant how to proceed if not satisfied.
- If legal action is implied, threatened or formally commenced at this stage, any response to the complainant by the Foundation under the complaint's procedure should cease immediately, however the investigation will continue internally.

**Formal Complaints (Stage 3)**

If the complainant feels that the complaint/concern has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 2, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by and Executive Director.

The request for Executive Director review should be acknowledged (see Appendix 2) within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Executive Director may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so.

In the case of a stage 3 complaint within Education, the Executive Director will inform the Chair of the Governing Body so that a complaints panel can be established comprising school governors.

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- Explain the legislative framework and what it means in practice at the school/college level
- Recommend improvements to statutory policies

**Serious Maladministration**

A complaint of serious maladministration should be progressed immediately as a formal complaint.

The Chief Executive of The Percy Hedley Foundation should be the first person to approach where the matter could involve disciplinary or legal action against Senior Managers or if there is any suspicion of financial irregularity.

If the complaint relates to the actions of the CEO the complaint should be raised with the Chair of the Foundation.

**Organisational learning**

Summary details of all complaints, the outcomes of any investigations, any shortcomings in

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## Further steps

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## **6. Associated Policies & References**

### National Guidance

Education Act 2002 – Section 29: Additional Functions of Governing Body

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/29/enacted>

Care Quality Commission Fundamental Standards – Regulation 20: Duty of Candour

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulation-20-duty-candour#guidance>

The Fundraising Regulator - Complaints Handling Guidance for Charities

### Associated Policies:

Duty of Candour

Whistleblowing Policy

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