

Complaints Procedure (External)

UNDER REVIEW

This procedure implements the Corporate Governance Policy and outlines the process through which students, parents and carers may raise concerns and the steps Young Epilepsy will take in managing all complaints made, whether formal or informal

BACKGROUND

This procedure has been written to comply with the requirements of the following:

- The Education Act, 1988; Section 23
- The Children Act of 1989
- The Education Reform Act, 1988
- National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools
- (Dept. of Health) April 2002
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Children's Homes Regulations 1991
- National Care Standards 2003
- OFSTED Framework for School and College Inspection
- DfES Teaching Standards 1999 updated June 2003
- Independent Healthcare Standards and Regulations (Dept of Health) Feb 2002

Young Epilepsy is an organisation that values the views of all its stakeholders, most notably its students and their parents / carers. We actively encourage feedback and seek to empower anyone who uses our services to raise concerns and comments they may have. If we know what these concerns are and they are reported in good time, it helps us to investigate the problems so that we can:

- Put things right if mistakes have been made
- Ensure physical, emotional and learning needs of the young people at Young Epilepsy are fully met and they feel happy
- Ensure that concerns or complaints have been listened to by Senior Managers and resolved to your satisfaction
- Improve our processes, if necessary, to ensure similar problems don't happen again
- Apologise if mistakes have been made and learn from them.

We strive for excellence at Young Epilepsy. We can only do this if students, parents and others tell us when things have gone wrong. It is very important for us to receive feedback as soon as possible.

Everyone who uses Young Epilepsy's services has a right to be treated fairly and with respect and will never knowingly be treated with any form of discrimination.

We also recognise that students learning how to express and discuss things that cause concern or worry, or how to ask for an explanation of something, is a very important part of their education in regard to being assertive, making decisions and becoming more independent.

There is an "easy read" version of this complaints procedure available on the student intranet.

PROCEDURE

When should I complain?

If you are unhappy with any aspect of any service being offered, the best way to complain is to tell the member of staff concerned straight away, so that they can put it right immediately. Young Epilepsy expects its staff and volunteers to respect your wishes, listen to your concerns and either respond to them, or explain clearly if there are good reasons for not doing what you ask.

In most cases, a satisfactory outcome should be promptly reached and you will be asked if you want us to record your complaint in our 'Low Level Complaints Book'. This will record the date, time and place, what your concern was and who was involved. If you are happy with the outcome, this will be treated as an *informal complaint* and no further action will take place. If you are not satisfied with the way you are treated, you have the right to make a *formal complaint*.

What happens if I make a formal complaint?

Making a formal complaint means that:

- Your complaint is recorded and thoroughly investigated by an appropriate senior member of staff
- You will receive a first written reply within *five working days*
- You will receive a final written reply within *20 working days*
- You will be given the reasons for our response
- Matters will be put right whenever possible and improvements made to make sure the problem does not happen again in the future.

How do I make a complaint?

You can use the way that suits you best to make a complaint:

- You can tell a senior member of staff such as the Residential Manager or Senior Nurse or a senior teacher, who will then make a note of your complaint, give you a copy and send it to the relevant Director
- You can telephone, email, or write to us. If you do not have the details of the staff member you wish to contact, contact our switchboard on 01342 832243 and they will provide you with details
- If you make a telephone complaint, the person taking your call will take notes and will send a copy of the notes to you for your agreement.
- If you need support to make a complaint, you have the right to ask anyone you trust (a tutor, therapist, a nurse or a member of support staff) to help you.
- If you raise a concern in another way, for example by a parental Annual Review feedback form, we will contact you to discuss this with you in advance of the review so that we can decide with you whether you wish to address your concern in the full meeting or in a separate meeting. The choice is yours; the chair of the review will not influence your decision.
- We will confirm with you that you wish a concern to be investigated and taken forward as a formal complaint.

What can you expect from us?

We will tell you that we have received your complaint, so that you know that we are dealing with it. This will usually be by letter from the relevant Director. It will tell you who is looking into your complaint and the timescale in which they will report back to you. You should receive this first written response *within five working days*.

You will receive a response, either when the investigation is completed, or an update on its progress, *within 20 working days* of receipt of the complaint.

A record of all complaints is maintained by the Director of Resources. This allows us to analyse trends and common themes and ensures that a Director is accountable for reporting complaints to the Board of Trustees at regular intervals.

Where any complaint raises issues that require us to report your concerns to a regulator, we will do this immediately and inform you of the notification in our response to you.

After the investigation, the response to your concern/complaint should cover all points that you have raised, apologise if an error has occurred and give you the opportunity to discuss the findings or confirm that you are satisfied that your complaint has been dealt with.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, you have the right to appeal and ask for a further investigation to be carried out. Your request should be made directly to the Chief Executive's office. The Chief Executive will then commission an appropriate review to be carried out by internal or external staff.

If you still feel that your complaint has not been dealt with properly after it has been investigated within Young Epilepsy, you can contact the appropriate agency from the referral list given below.

Referral

If, at any stage of the procedure you are unhappy with the process of the complaint or in its resolution, you may refer the matter to the address listed below.

For Adult Social Care Services and Health Services:

Customer Services Telephone: 03000 616161

The Care Quality Commission Citygate, Website: www.cqc.org.uk
Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4 WH

- Provider ID – 1-101610290
- Location ID – 1-137790641

For Educational Services and Children’s Care:

Ofsted, 3rd Floor, Royal Exchange Buildings, Telephone: 08456 404040
St Ann’s Square, Manchester, M2 7LA

Young Epilepsy Children’s Home Registration
Number: SC394025

Residential Special Schools Registration
Number: SC013943

Facsimile: 08456 404049

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This procedure is agreed by the Chair of the Board and Chief Executive Officer and will be implemented by all Departments.

Signed:

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Date:

Chair of the Board

Date of next review: 1 November 2016

Signed:

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Carol Long, Chief Executive Officer