

# North of England Refugee Service

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

|                         |              |                             |
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| Document originated:    | 28/02/00     | By: Georgina Fletcher / QTG |
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The North of England Refugee Service (NERS) aims to provide services of a standard acceptable to all our users. Quality is a core value of NERS and we are committed to establishing Best Practice and a consistent, high quality standard across our service provision. Monitoring of our standards will best be achieved through establishing effective pathways for, and as a response to, complaints. NERS' service design and delivery will be systematically improved by the use of such feedback.

A complaint is regarded as a verbal or written issue of serious dissatisfaction expressed by a client that warrants the client expressing their grievance to the organisation and requiring response.

### **1. Formal Complaints:**

1. NERS' users have the right to make formal complaints about the services or treatment they have received from us. Relevant staff should try to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity and at the lowest level. However, should the user wish to pursue this in writing a formal complaints procedure exists for clients' use, and complaints can be made in their own language.
2. All staff must be aware that such a complaints procedure exists for clients and advise them of this.
3. Notices displayed in client areas will inform users of the existence of NERS' complaints procedure, and direct them to the information leaflet on how to complain and the complaints form.
4. The complaints procedure is as stated in the complaints leaflet and all staff should be familiar with it by reading the complaints form attached.
5. Any formal complaint made in this way will be referred to the CEO. The CEO will ensure that, within 7 working days after he had been notified of a complaint, the client receives written acknowledgement that their complaint has been received. The CEO will, as soon as possible, delegate the investigation of the complaint to a specific investigating officer, who will report findings back to the CEO within 5 working days after the completion of the investigation. The CEO's decision will be communicated in writing to the client within further 7 working days. If this is not possible a new letter will be sent to a client with approximate date of final decision. The client would have the right to appeal against the CEO's decision. If s/he decided to appeal s/he would have to state the grounds of the appeal:

- Policies have not been properly implemented
- New evidence is found that might have impact on the decision

If the CEO's decision is not to the satisfaction of the client, then the client may appeal to the Chair of the BoD within 10 calendar days of the previous decision. It will be the Chair's/Vice chair's responsibility to review the decision. The Chair of the BoD's response is the final decision of NERS.

## **2. Informal Complaints**

NERS will also deal with and respond to informal complaints to inform us of any failings and shortfalls in our service. Where clients express their concern to any member of staff without wishing to make a formal complaint, or offer a suggestion for improvement, these communications should be logged by the member of staff in the Client Feedback Register and a copy forwarded to the QTG Co-ordinator at the Head Office for recording.

Each office has a dedicated suggestion box. Complaints and suggestions can be deposited in these boxes and will be reviewed by the QTG at regular intervals. Members of QTG at each site should empty the boxes before the next QTG meeting.

### **Recording User feedback and Complaints**

1. All members of staff will be responsible for logging informal user-feedback (whether written or oral) in the dedicated Client Feedback Register in each site using the informal complaints and suggestions log form.
2. QTG Co-ordinator will be responsible for logging all formal and informal complaints received in the dedicated Complaints File. Complaints should be logged, using the complaints monitoring form, to include name, date of receipt, the outline nature of the complaint.
3. Each member of staff involved in the investigation of a complaint is expected to fully co-operate with the designated investigating officer.
4. All formal complaints are to be referred to the CEO for action.
5. In case of a complaint against the QTG Co-ordinator, it will be the CEO who will log and file the complaint as above.
6. Details of action taken to resolve each complaint will be added to the central log form and outcome of the investigation communicated to the relevant line manager.
7. The Complaints file is confidential. Access will be restricted to the SMT, and the Chair of the Board of Directors.

### **Monitoring Complaints**

1. Summary reports of suggestions and complaints will be provided for the Board of Directors by the QTG Co-ordinator on an annual basis, using the complaints monitoring forms and the Client Feedback Register.

2. The Quality Task Group will make an annual review of suggestions and complaints received.
3. The Board of Directors and QTG will be responsible for ensuring that suggestions & complaints are used to inform NERS' service design and delivery, with the aim of seeking constant and consistent improvement in the quality of service provided to our users.

### **Implementation**

1. The HR Officer and Regional Volunteer Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring that all new workers are made aware of NERS' Complaints Procedure through its inclusion in Staff and Volunteer Induction packs.
  2. Site Manager and Project Leaders will also ensure that a notice informing clients of their right to complain is displayed in each office.
  3. A copy of NERS' Complaints Procedure will also be included in the Board of Director's Induction Pack.
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Approved by the Board of Directors:

Signature: .....

Position: .....

Date: .....

# North of England Refugee Service

## INFORMAL COMPLAINTS & SUGGESTIONS LOG

Date:

Details of Complaint/Suggestion:

Suggestions as to Improvement/Solution:

Feedback required: Yes  No

Method of contact: .....

Complainant's Name: (it is not necessary to leave a name if the client prefers not to):

Recorder's Name:

Please send a copy to the Head Office

# North of England Refugee Service

## FORMAL COMPLAINTS MONITORING FORM

Use separate sheet for each separate complaint

| <b>Date received</b> | Complainant Name & Address | How <sup>1</sup> | Brief Details of Complaint | Acknowledgement letter sent | Resolution | Investigation completed | Lead Worker |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                      |                            |                  |                            |                             |            |                         |             |

CEO's decision: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> P= Personal communication    T= By Telephone    W= In writing    E= Email