

# Brighter Futures

## COMPLAINTS & FEEDBACK POLICY



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## **Complaints Policy Statement**

Brighter Futures is committed to providing an appropriate standard of services to our community, and being accountable to our members/service users, other agencies, organisations and stakeholders. To do this we will take seriously any concern or complaint and will investigate it promptly, for resolution as quickly as possible.

Brighter Futures recognises that everyone in our community has the right to raise concerns or complaints about our services and to be treated fairly if/when doing so.

**All staff, volunteers Trustees members are required to read, understand and comply with this policy**

## **Introduction**

Brighter Futures strives for high standards in all we do, we welcome feedback from individuals, users of our services, stakeholders, funding bodies and anyone who works with us. Feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our work.

## **The objectives of Brighter Futures complaints policy and procedures are to:**

Ensure everyone knows how to make a complaint and how a complaint will be handled  
Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear time frames  
Provide individuals with a fair and effective way to complain about our work  
Ensure that complaints are monitored to improve our services

## **Brighter Futures will ensure that we:**

Listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential.  
Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within a reasonable time frame.  
Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal  
Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented in order to ensure that there is no re-occurrence  
Report on an annual basis, the number of complaints received, the outcomes and any actions taken.

## **Definition of a complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, whether justified or not.

## **An individual may make a complaint if they feel Brighter Futures has:**

Failed to provide a service or an acceptable standard of service or made a mistake in the way the service was provided  
Failed to act in a proper way  
Provided an unfair service

This policy and procedure relates only to complaints received about Brighter Futures and its services.

## **Concern or Complaint**

It is important to establish the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the likelihood of their developing into formal complaints.

If you have any concerns about our work please tell a staff worker or their manager as soon as possible, so they can quickly understand your concerns and try to put things right.

If you are not happy with the response to your concern and/or you want to make a formal complaint please follow the procedure below.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Brighter Futures aims to settle the majority of complaints quickly and satisfactorily by the member of staff who provides the service. The complaint may be resolved quickly by way of an apology or by an acceptable explanation to the individual.

**There are three stages to the complaint's procedure:**

Stage One – the complaint

Stage Two – investigation

Stage Three – appeal

#### **Stage One – the complaint**

The complaint can be written or if the individual prefers they can tell someone at Brighter Futures, or someone else, who will write it down for them. The complainant will need to sign it. A complaint form is available to use at appendix 1

Individuals wishing to make a complaint should contact the person who provided the service, or their line manager. Alternatively, they can contact us by writing to: Brighter Futures, 34 Wellington Road, Rhyl, Denbighshire LL18 1BN

The complaint should include the complainants name and address, the nature and date of the complaint and how they want to see it resolved. The complaints form can be requested and can be sent to the complainant or collected by the complainant.

On receipt, each complaint will be allocated a reference number and logged on the complaints register. Complainants must receive an acknowledgement within 3 working days of receipt of a signed complaint.

#### **Stage Two - Investigation**

All complaints at this stage should be dealt with by a manager. If they need to meet with the complainant, they will do so within seven working days of receiving the written complaint.

Complaints will be fully investigated, and a written response provided to the complainant within ten working days by the investigator.

The complainant will receive written confirmation of the outcome of any investigation any recommendations/remedies made, such as reviewing of policies, staff development and training or appropriate improvement to our services.

Where the complaint is upheld an apology should be offered.

Occasionally investigations may take longer, particularly if the complaint is complex. Should this be the case a holding letter will be sent after ten working days and a final date given for a conclusion to be reached.

If an individual remains dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage Two they can appeal within fourteen working days of the date of the outcome and progress to Stage Three.

The complaints register will be updated, and any pending complaints flagged so they are followed up

### **Stage Three - Appeal**

If the complaint cannot be resolved to the complainants satisfaction at stage two, or if the manager feels that the complaint is of a very serious nature, or concerns a service leader then it will be referred to the Chief Executive.

If the complaint is about the Chief Executive then the matter will be discussed with two Trustees.

The Chief Executive and/or Trustees will acknowledge receipt within three working days, they will review the Stage Two investigation and recommend one of the following actions within ten working days (from the date the complainant stated they wanted to take the complaint to stage 3):

Uphold the action taken at Stage Two

Make changes to the Stage Two recommendation/actions

The complainant should be informed in writing of the outcome of stage three, the decision reached about this complaint will then be final but other options available to the complainant (as listed below) should be detailed in the letter.

If after Brighter Futures has been through the three stages and the complainant is still not satisfied with the result, they should be advised that there is no further right of appeal with Brighter Futures but they could approach any of the following agencies for advice:

A solicitor

Citizens Advice Bureau

Charity Commission

ICO (Information commissioner)

This should be done within one month of receiving the outcome from the appeal.

**Anonymous complaints**

Complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

### **Data protection**

To process a complaint Brighter Futures will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides, and which other people give in response to the complaint. We will hold this data securely and only use it to address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applied or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

Brighter Futures will normally destroy complaints files in a secure manner six years after the complaint has been closed.

### **Monitoring**

Complaints are an important tool which, alongside data provided by exit surveys, stakeholder surveys, user feedback and focus groups, will allow us to learn about the services we provide. They provide a useful source of information about how individuals see our services and how we are serving them. To ensure we can learn from complaints the following data will be collected:

Name and address

Name of person dealing with the complaint

Date of complaint and response

Nature of complaint

Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the complaint Lessons learnt

Complaints information will be considered on a regular basis by the Management Team and reported annually to Brighter Futures board of Trustees. Wherever possible the data will be used to improve and develop the service.

## **Contents**

1. Scope and purpose of the policy
2. Policy statement
3. Accountability
4. Members involvement
5. Linked procedures

### **1. Scope and purpose of policy**

The complaints and feedback policy applies to all the services of Brighter Futures and is available to employees, volunteers and members of the public.

The purpose of the policy is to provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to provide meaningful feedback to drive continuous improvement.

### **2. Policy statement**

#### **Compliments and Feedback**

Brighter Futures welcomes feedback from the local and wider community and stakeholders. There are number of options available to provide compliments and feedback to BF.

- Surveys
- Forums
- E-mailing: [hello@brighterfuturesrhyl.co.uk](mailto:hello@brighterfuturesrhyl.co.uk) or [trustees@brighterfuturesrhyl.co.uk](mailto:trustees@brighterfuturesrhyl.co.uk)
- By talking to any of our team members
- By writing to the Trustees or an individual member of the committee

## **Complaints**

Brighter Futures welcomes feedback from the community and stakeholders and is committed to continuously improving the services it provides.

Brighter Futures is committed to openness and transparency by providing well publicised and accessible information on how to give feedback or make a complaint.

Compliments, complaints and feedback will be dealt with courteously, fairly and objectively.

Compliments, complaints and feedback are addressed appropriately through Brighter Futures procedures.

## **Confidentiality**

Where it is reasonable to do so, confidentiality will be observed, throughout the operation of this policy. Where a complaint relates to specific individuals, Brighter Futures may seek permission to share such details with them. If permission is not given, it may not be possible for Brighter Futures to fully investigate or resolve the complaint.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

Brighter Futures does not normally accept or act upon anonymous complaints, as by their very nature, it is not normally possible to collect all relevant information for an investigation to take place and respond accordingly. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances where Brighter Futures

deems it appropriate to investigate a complaint from an anonymous source, which identifies a risk to the Brighter Futures itself, our stakeholders or to the public.

### **Vexatious and Malicious Complaints**

A vexatious or malicious complaint is defined as a complaint which is deemed unreasonable or untrue, having been put forward so as to abuse the complaints procedure, or an attempt to defame the name or character of another person. In cases where a complaint is considered to be vexatious or malicious, Brighter Futures reserves the right to terminate investigation of the complaint and may consider legal or disciplinary action.

### **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Permission to Disclose**

If the complainant wishes for someone else to raise concerns with us on their behalf, Brighter Futures has a legal obligation under the Data Protection Act 2018; with regard to sharing information with third parties. Therefore, Brighter Futures will require written permission to share this information with them.

Before permission is given to share the information with others, the complainant must consider whether our response will include any sensitive information about them. The complainant is required to contact us in advance to tell us which sensitive information we can and cannot share.

### **Collective/group complaints**

Collective/group complaints are expected to identify how each individual has been personally affected by the issues which are being brought to the attention of Brighter Futures. Each individual named in the collective complaint must agree with the content of the complaint before it is submitted and individually sign to say that they are in agreement of the same. Only the nominated spokesperson will receive communication/correspondence from Brighter Futures.

Brighter Futures operates a staged complaint procedure (see Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Procedure on our website).

### **Accountability**

- The Committee is responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedure is up to date and published on the Brighter Futures website
- Employees are responsible for the resolution of complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the procedure
- The Chairperson, is responsible for the review of a complaint at Stage 3 of the procedure

### **Members Involvement**

Member input is essential in understanding the experience of participants and must be used to inform quality processes. Any feedback regarding the level of service identified by a complaint must be examined to ensure that the root causes of complaints are addressed and are used to support continuous improvement.

### **Linked Policies, Procedures and statements**

- Safeguarding Policy (VA and CYP)
- Data Protection Policy
- Financial controls Policy
- Various Risk Assessments
- Equal opportunities Policy
- Employee handbook (Brighter Futures employees only)
- Environmental Policy

Complainant Details: <i>(name and address)</i>	Complaint No:
	Received by:
	Date:
Telephone call / Letter / Other (attach letter) Delete as appropriate	
DESCRIPTION OF COMPLAINT In your own words, please tell us what we have got wrong	
What would you like as a resolution	
Investigation & Comments:	
Signed:	
Action Taken:	
Response to Customer:	
Date Complaint Closed Off: SIGNED:	

Note any further comments/info on the back of this form