



## **Carers Information Service Complaints Policy**

The Carers Information Service is committed to providing a free, independent and confidential information and advice service to carers and the professionals who work with them. This includes providing a service to people who use our Carers Support Centre.

We welcome comments from people who have been in contact with us so that we can ensure that we are meeting the needs of carers and other users of our service in the best possible way. We do however recognise that there may be occasions when someone is dissatisfied with the service and we need to respond quickly to put this right.

### **Help with Making Your Complaint**

There is a simple process for making a complaint about the Carers Information Service. If however you need help making a complaint about our service, we will try to signpost you to an appropriate organisation.

### **Our Commitment to You**

- We will deal with your complaint politely and in confidence.
- It will be looked into thoroughly, fairly and as quickly as possible.
- We will keep you up to date with what we are doing.
- We will apologise if we have made a mistake.
- We will tell you what we are going to do to put things right.

### **Procedure for Complaints**

Our procedure for handling complaints is as follows:

#### **Stage 1: Informal Resolution**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally, and in the first instance you should discuss the matter with the individual concerned. In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway.

If you do not wish to talk to the individual concerned, or if initial discussion has not solved the problem, you may ask to speak to the Carers Information Service Manager. This will be done on the same day where practical and within a maximum of one day.

The Carers Information Service Manager will discuss your concern with you and will attempt to resolve your complaint informally. If this is difficult for you, a friend or representative can speak to us on your behalf. The Manager will keep a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received.

### **Stage 2: Formal Resolution**

If you have not been able to resolve your complaint informally, you will be sent a copy of this Complaints Policy and advised of your rights.

Please put your complaint in writing to the Carers Information Service Manager within 14 days. The address to send it to is:

Helen Thompson  
Manager  
Carers Information Service  
Carers Support Centre  
24 George Street  
Croydon CR0 1PB

It will be helpful if you can provide full details of the nature of the complaint including dates, times and names as appropriate and enclose copies of any documents that you would like us to consider. It would also be helpful if you let us know how you would prefer to be contacted. Receipt of your complaint will be acknowledged within three days.

The Carers Information Service Manager will investigate the complaint and may need to contact you for further details. The Carers Information Service Manager will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Carers Information Service Manager is satisfied that all of the relevant facts have been established, a letter will be written to you within 14 days to tell you of any action we propose to take in response to your complaint, or our reason for not taking any further action.

### **Stage 3: Panel Hearing**

If you feel that you have not had a satisfactory response, then you may write to the Chief Executive of the Whitgift Foundation (of which the Carers' Information Service is a part), who has been appointed by the Governors of the Court of the Whitgift Foundation to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. You must do this within 14 days of receipt of our reply. If we have not heard from you by then we will assume that you do not want to take things further.

Please address your letter to:

Martin Corney  
Chief Executive  
The Whitgift Foundation  
North End  
Croydon CR9 1SS

The complaint will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three people not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, one of which shall be independent of the Carers' Information Service. Each panel member shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Governors of the Court of the Whitgift Foundation. The Clerk to the Foundation, will then acknowledge your complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 working days of receipt of the complaint by the Clerk.

If possible the panel will resolve your complaint immediately without need for further investigation. If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further information be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied by the Chief Executive to the Foundation to all parties not later than seven days prior to a meeting. You may attend the panel hearing and one other person may accompany you to the hearing - this may be a relative, a friend or advocate.

Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision, which it shall complete within 14 days of the hearing. The panel will write to you informing you of the decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the panel will be final.

### **Recording and Monitoring Complaints**

Complaints are recorded and kept centrally by the Carers Information Service Manager. All complaints are kept confidentially in line with the Carers Information Service *Confidentiality Policy*.

### **Ensuring the Effectiveness of the Policy**

All Carers Information Service staff and volunteers will receive a copy of the Complaints Policy. The policy will be reviewed annually and amendments made

where necessary. This policy is available on request and will be publicised on our website.

First written: October 2006  
Reviewed: annually  
Last reviewed: February 2018  
Person Responsible: CIS Manager