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Nightstop Complaints Policy

Policy

Wyre Forest & South Worcestershire Nightstop is committed to providing the best possible service to its service users. We can't achieve this unless we hear and act on their views. One of the ways we do this is by encouraging and supporting people to make complaints about their experience of our work, and suggestions about how we can resolve the problem. We are committed to considering complaints fairly and changing our services for the better as a result.

We must also be held to account for the quality of the services we provide. This Complaints Policy is an important tool to enable young people and potential clients to hold us to account for things they find we have not done well.

Purpose

We have this policy so that:

- It is easy for anyone to make a complaint about Nightstop services.
- We listen to, investigate and act on complaints in a fair, transparent, professional and timely way.
- People believe that if they approach us with a problem with our services we will do something about it, and they are therefore empowered with the knowledge that they can initiate change.
- We change our services for the better as a result of complaints we receive.
- A record is kept of all complaints, and they are reported through the quarterly reporting structure.

Scope

This policy sets out how people can complain and how they can expect Nightstop to deal with their complaint. It encourages people's involvement in how their complaint is resolved.

Who can complain?

- Anyone who is using, has used or has tried to use Nightstop's services. This includes anyone who is on Nightstop with a recognised Nightstop host.
- A parent or guardian, a worker from another service or another third party may complain on the person's behalf with their consent. When someone makes a complaint on behalf of the person who is dissatisfied, someone from Nightstop will normally need



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to speak to that person as well. This is because we need to know that the advocate is fully representing the views and wishes of the person who is dissatisfied.

- Any other parties who may have contact with Nightstop services, including other organisations, individuals or suppliers who are or have been directly or indirectly involved with the organisation or have a legitimate interest in the delivery of our objectives. Anybody who is involved in organising events or any other fundraising activities for Nightstop.

What can they complain about?

A person may complain about any part of the service, or a decision made about them which affects them, or about being denied a service. They may also complain about any part of their experience whilst on Nightstop with a Nightstop host. All complaints, regardless of their manner, will be dealt with using the following procedure.

Procedure

Letting people know

The complaints procedure will be circulated round the staff and any other interested parties, so that they are aware of their and the clients right to complain and how to go about it. Information will be provided in the following ways:

- The procedure will be explained as soon as possible after a client, or any other partner first comes into contact with the service, and a leaflet provided for them to keep.

Recognising a complaint

People choose to voice their dissatisfaction in various ways, for example.

- Verbally to a staff member or volunteer
- In keywork or support sessions
- By putting it in writing
- By making a complaint to a third party, e.g., someone from another organisation
- By expressing their anger or frustration with a service or individual

Dissatisfaction raised in any of these ways should be recognised as a potential complaint.



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Receiving a complaint

When a member of staff receives a complaint through any of these routes, they should explain to the person their right to complain and that Nightstop encourages them to do so and ensure that they understand how to make a complaint.

If an anonymous complaint is made, it should be recorded, and staff should do what they reasonably can to investigate it.

The Complaint Stages

As far as possible all complaints should be resolved close to the point at which the problem arose.

There are three stages to the complaint's procedure.

Stage 1

If a young person has a complaint, they should inform a support worker. Any other complaints in the first instance should be reported to the community engagement officer or CEO as appropriate.

All complaints, even very informal ones, must be recorded in writing so that we can monitor our response to them, and this is where the recording process begins. If the person making the complaint has not already written it down there are three options, all using the complaints form:

- The complainant approaches the relevant member of the organisation, their support worker or the community engagement officer or CEO as appropriate.
- The team member or the complainant notes the complaint, this is then agreed and signed by both parties.

The team member will make every effort to resolve the complaint locally. Time should be taken to resolve the complaint and talking concerns over with the young person/complainant will be treated with the upmost priority. All complaints should be reported to the CEO, even if they have been resolved.

If the complaint can't be resolved between the person making the complaint and the worker, the worker should involve the relevant manager, who will try to resolve it.

If a complaint is made directly to either the Homelessness Prevention Lead or Mediation and Education Lead they should ensure it is recorded as above and respond directly



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rather than referring it to one of their Officers, although other staff may need to be involved in order to resolve it appropriately and effectively.

Stage 1 complaints should be dealt with within **8 days** of the complaint being received.

If the person is still not satisfied, the Lead should explain the next stage and assist them if they wish to go to stage 2.

Stage 2

Copies of the completed complaint form and any records of subsequent actions by the relevant staff and the responses of the person making the complaint should be passed to the **CEO. At this stage the Chair of Trustees** will also be informed.

The CEO will **acknowledge receipt** of the complaint **within 1 week** of receiving it.

The CEO will then investigate the complaint, normally including meeting with the person making the complaint, form a decision and inform the person in writing. Where possible, the CEO should meet the person again to explain the reasons for the decision.

The **investigation and feedback** should be completed **within 4 weeks** of the CEO receiving the complaint.

If the person is still not satisfied, they will be advised of the third stage and the complaint will then be passed to members of the Trustee Board

Stage 3

Stage 3 involves two members of the Trustee Board. An appropriate officer will be responsible for briefing the members and will attend the meeting.

A meeting should be set up within four weeks. The Trustees hearing the complaint should be given copies of the records relating to the complaint at least a week before the meeting. They should have the opportunity to seek any necessary clarification on any factual points arising from the information they have received before the meeting. If this is not possible in advance, it can be done at the beginning of the meeting.

The person making the complaint has the right to be present, and they should be reminded that they can bring a supporter or advocate. The CEO should also be present so that the panel can ask questions of both parties. If the person making the complaint is not comfortable with a meeting this size, they and the CEO can go in separately.



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The outcome of this meeting should be communicated to the person making the complaint in writing within **3 days** and should be explained in a meeting with the CEO.

External

Nightstop's Complaints Procedure ends after stage 3, with no further action available within the organisation. It is therefore very important that people are given the information they need to secure some external support to help them get the best out of the process if they choose, as outlined.

If someone is not satisfied with the outcome at the end of their complaints process external agencies such as a Citizen's Advice Bureau, Law Centre or Advocacy should be able to advise the complainant if there is anything else they can do.

Recording

All complaints and their nature should be recorded in order that they can be reviewed, both at service and organisation level.

They should all be kept together in a separate complaints file on the shared drive.

At Stage 1 the worker receiving the complaint should record it. Further records at Stages 2 and 3 would be the responsibility of the Lead member of staff.

Complaints alleging misconduct

Receiving the complaint

Where a complaint raises the possibility that a member of staff has demonstrated misconduct whoever receives the complaint must pass it directly to a service Lead. The Lead must discuss with the CEO if they consider at any stage that there is a possibility of professional misconduct.

If the person making the complaint is uncomfortable with or afraid to raise the issue with a service Lead, they can approach the CEO directly.

If the allegation of misconduct is against the CEO, the complaint should be made directly to the Chair of Trustees.



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The Disciplinary Procedure

Complaints are one of the many ways in which managers can become aware of potential misconduct, or breaches in standards or performance, by staff or managers. When a complaint raises such issues, they will be dealt with as set out in the Disciplinary Policy.

Protecting the person who is making the complaint

The service Lead will be responsible for taking appropriate steps to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of the person making the complaint; including appointing an independent support person from elsewhere in the organisation if this would be beneficial. If, for example, the person does not feel safe or comfortable continuing to stay at or use the service every effort will be made to support them to find appropriate alternative provision, either within or outside Nightstop.

Review

Review any complaints received and the responses to them within service teams at least every six months in order to assess whether:

- they have been dealt with successfully and within required timescales.
- appropriate changes have been made as a result.
- there are trends in the causes of complaints which can be dealt with in order to prevent the problem from recurring.

Reporting

The complaints policy is integrated into Nightstop's system for reporting and Accountability.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or more regularly if required.

Date of Policy: 24th January 2023 Version: 4

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Lina".

Signature CEO: