

Safeguarding Complaints Procedures



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At Activity Alliance we recognise that:

- We recognise that everyone who comes into contact with Activity Alliance has a right to high standard of service
- Those who come into contact with Activity Alliance have the right to complain if they are not happy with the standard of service they receive
- We believe that learning from complaints helps us to improve the service we provide

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:

- Help us to provide a service of the highest standard to all those who come into contact with Activity Alliance
- Help us to ensure that everyone knows they have a right to complain about our service if they feel they need to
- Help us deal with complaints in a positive way and use them to improve our services
- Set out issues that could be covered under this procedure
- Set out steps that people need to take of how to make a complaint if they feel they need to
- Set how we can deal with complaints in a fair and consistent way

This policy and procedure applies to all children, young people and adults who participate in or have contact with any Activity Alliance activity or service.

It is not intended to be used by staff or volunteers who are unhappy about their own experience in the workplace. In these circumstances, staff should use the grievance policy and procedures. It is also not intended to cover concerns that a staff or volunteer may have about issues of possible malpractice or misconduct in the workplace. These should be dealt with under the Whistle-Blowing policy.

If anyone, whether a staff member, volunteer, child/young person or adult is concerned that a safeguarding issue has happened and some is at risk of harm, they should refer to the Activity Alliance Child and Young Person protection Policy or Activity Alliance Safeguarding Adults at risk rather than the complaints policy.

We will seek to deal with complaints by:

- Defining clearly what we mean by a complaint
- Setting out a procedure that can easily followed and understood
- Making sure that everyone knows about the policy and procedure
- Producing child, young people and adult friendly material explaining this policy and procedure
- Reassuring people that they will not be penalised in any way for using the complaints procedure and that we will respond positively to any complaints made in good faith
- Offering extra support to those who may need help making a complaint
- Taking a staged approach to complaints that takes into account the level of seriousness and the possibility of resolution at different points

- Investigating each complaint as objectively and fully as we reasonably can
- Keeping the complainant informed during the course of the investigation and of the outcome of his/her complaint
- Keeping clear records of complaints and how they were resolved

Complaints procedure

What do you mean by a complaint?

A complaint is a statement from someone that he/she is not happy about the service provided to him/her by Activity Alliance and would like this improved:

The complaint might be about:

- The behaviour of a staff member or volunteer
- The behaviour of other service users
- The level of service received
- The type of service received
- Being refused a service altogether
- Written information
- Service received over the telephone
- A person feeling that they have been treated unfairly or in a way that is discriminatory
- Anything else related to the service provided by Activity Alliance

Procedure for making a complaint

1. If possible, the person should discuss the complaint with their contact at Activity Alliance
2. The Activity Alliance contact will, in the first instance, try to resolve the matter informally. This is often possible and can mean that the problem is sorted out simply and quickly
3. If an informal solution has been tried before and has not worked, or if the complainant does not feel that informal discussions are adequate or likely to be effective, stage one of the complaints procedure should be followed.

Stage one

4. The complainant should put their concerns in writing to the relevant staff member at Activity Alliance, if the staff member is the subject of the complaint, to the staff member's manager. If he/she needs help to do this, and someone is not able to offer this support, help should be provided by the staff member, or, if the staff member is the subject of the complaint, by another member of staff identified by the manager.
5. The member of staff should give the written complaint to the manager within 24 hours. The manager should then acknowledge the complaint within two working days by sending a brief letter to:
 - Thank the complainant for getting in touch
 - Express regret that a complaint has been necessary
 - Assure him/her that the matter will be investigated
 - Set a provisional timescale for the investigation that is achievable but avoids delay as much as possible
 - Explain when the manager will next be in contact
 - Offer a contact in case the complainant has any questions in the meantime
 - Make any temporary arrangements that may be necessary pending the outcome of the investigation into the complaint.
6. Normal service to the complainant should continue during the investigation into the complaint. (i.e. a participant in an activity should be allowed to continue in other activities) If this is not possible then this should be acknowledged.
7. If the complaint is about a specific member of staff, volunteer or other person, then that person should be informed within two working days (or as soon as possible) that a complaint has been made against him/her and the nature of the complaint. However, the person should not be informed if doing so would compromise anyone's safety or a police investigation.
8. The manager should normally be responsible for the investigating a stage one complaint. The manager should plan the investigation according to the nature of the complaint, taking into account any witnesses or specialist opinion that should be sought. As a minimum, the complainant where possible (and parent/carer if needed) should be interviewed. Any person who might be subject of the complaint should also be interviewed, provided that doing so would not compromise anyone's safety or a police investigation.
9. If the complaint is about access to a service, the reasoning behind a decision to offer or not offer a particular service should be examined.

Monitoring and review

The Safeguarding Lead at Activity Alliance is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. This policy will be reviewed every two years. The next review is due on: 01 February 2018

For more information, please contact info@activityalliance.org.uk or call 01509 227750
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