

Bury Involvement Group

Complaints, Concerns and Negative Feedback Policy

Introduction

Bury Involvement Group (BIG) aims to run a safe and welcoming service for people who need to use it and the staff and volunteers who work here.

There may be times when a service user, or someone from outside the organisation, wishes to complain. There may also be times when somebody wishes to give us critical or negative feedback, or to raise concerns verbally, without making a formal complaint.

We aim to respond positively to all feedback, comments, criticisms and complaints and see this as a valuable process for improving what we do and becoming more sensitive to the needs of our service users. We welcome the involvement of advocates for service users who wish to complain. The Organisation would be unable to provide an independent advocate due to the cost of this, however, the Organisation can provide someone within the organisation who could support them to make a complaint.

Resolving Complaints

As a service user led organisation, listening to our service users is central to our way of working. Whenever possible and appropriate, we will try to resolve difficulties as soon and as straightforwardly as possible within the organisation.

We will respond to complaints, criticisms and negative feedback in whatever way we receive them and in the way that the complainant wishes us to respond. Some service users, carers or professionals may wish to make a formal complaint. However, we recognise that for somebody who is vulnerable, this may seem an intimidating process and they may wish to make an informal, verbal complaint, or simply give some critical feedback about the service. All complaints and criticisms will be recorded (**Appendix 1 – Record of Complaints, Concerns and Criticisms**) and action taken as appropriate.

It will help us to respond to complaints and criticisms swiftly if people bring to our attention the nature of their complaint and the time that the problem occurs. However, we recognise that people may reflect on a situation later and then realise that they feel let down or aggrieved. In this case, they could still make an informal or formal complaint.

Making a Formal Complaint

Formal complaints can be made in writing, by telephone, or in person to the CO or any of the Board Members. If the complaint is about the CO it should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Once a complaint has been received, it will be dealt with during a period of 15 working days. If this needs to be extended in order to thoroughly investigate the matter, then the person making the complaint will be kept informed of progress on a weekly basis. The outcome of any investigation will be recorded and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.

If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome they can appeal. Again, the appeal can be made verbally or in writing. The appeal would go to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If the Chair has already responded, the appeal would be heard by two other Board members. The appeal will be dealt with in 15 working days. As above, the complainant will be informed if this needs to be extended. The outcome of the appeal will be recorded and the complainant informed of the outcome.

Complaints about specific workers

Complaints may be about the service or about individual workers (paid or voluntary).

A service user who has made a complaint about specific workers will still be able to use the service, but will not work directly with workers who they have complained about until the situation is resolved. The resolution may be after the formal complaints procedure has been gone through, or the complainant may have agreed another mechanism for resolving the situation (i.e. to meet with the worker who the complaint is about to discuss the issues).

Wherever possible, and where this is appropriate, we will encourage the service user to discuss their complaint directly with the worker. This would not be appropriate if the complaint was of a serious nature, or would constitute misconduct if the complaint is upheld. But where a service user is unhappy with an interaction with a worker, for example, this may be the best course of action.

We recognise that if a worker has been complained about, this can be distressing and the investigatory process may be stressful. The organisation endeavours to support staff throughout the process. If a complaint is made against a volunteer a named person within the Organisation will be made available to contact whilst the issue is dealt with; in most circumstances this will be the Volunteer Coordinator.

Depending on the complaint made, a volunteer or employee may be suspended from volunteer, pending an investigation into the issue. The Organisation will follow the outlined procedure in the Problem Solving Policy for serious complaints about volunteers and the disciplinary policy for serious complaints about paid employees.

Monitoring Complaints

All complaints will be brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees. Complaints will be anonymised so that complainants are not identified. The Board will monitor the nature and number of complaints, in order to support the CO to identify improvements that need to be made within the service.

This policy is not intended to be exhaustive or to prescribe the course of action which is to be used in every situation. There may be times when the Board of Trustees choose to take a different approach. For example, if a service user is making persistent complaints which are seen as vexatious or if complaints made are symptomatic of deterioration in someone's mental health. In these instances, the CO will adopt a course of action in consultation with the team, where appropriate. This would also be discussed in the CO's supervision with the Chair. In all situations, service users will be treated with compassion and respect and their complaint will be responded to.

Ratified by the Board of Trustees: August 2018

Next Review: August 2021

Appendix 1 – Bury Involvement Group: Record of Complaints, Concerns and Criticisms

Date	Complaint	Nature of Complaint	Status of Complaint (i.e. formal complaint, verbal feedback)	Action Taken (with dates)	Outcome of Complaint