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**Service User Complaints Policy**

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| **Policy name** | Service User Complaints Policy  |
| **Department** | Human Resources |
| **Author** | Becky Parke  |
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| **Responsible Trustee** |  |
| **Approved by Board** | 24th September 2024 |
| **Review Date** | September 2027 |

*This policy relates to Crewe YMCA Ltd, referred to as ‘the Company’ throughout this document. For the avoidance of doubt, this relates to all trading names used by Crewe YMCA Ltd, for example ‘YMCA Crewe’, ‘YMCA Cheshire’ and ‘YMCA Macclesfield’.*

**Aim of policy**

The Company wishes to provide the best possible service. The aim of the Service User Complaints Policy is to ensure that the principle stakeholders in the Company, the service users, have a clear and robust route for making any complaints related to the service or the staff (ie not complaints from one service user about another). Complaints and suggestions should be viewed as a way to improve our practice, and therefore be welcomed and encouraged by staff

**Legislation**

This policy relates to the following legislation:

* The Equality Act 2010
* The Complaint Handling Code

**Definitions**

In line with the Complaint Handling Code, a ‘complaint’ is defined as: “an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.”

A complaint does not need to be labeled as or expressed using the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. The Company will therefore accept all issues raised seriously and log them as a complaint, not rejecting any complaints.

A service user complaint is different to a service user request. A service user request is definied as a report to the Company of an issue that needs to be fixed in the service user’s room/ apartment/ flat/ property.

The HR & Administration Manager is the Company’s designated complaints officer.

**Policy statements**

* The Company will make the complaints process visibile, open and transparent. Service users are made aware of how to make a complaint on entry to the service and information about how to complain is available in a number of locations e.g. the Licence Agreement, website and the back of all service users room door’s.
* The Company will make the complaints process accessible to all, and available in a number of different formats such as digital, written, or verbal.
* Complaint forms and guidelines with information on how to make a complaint will be easily available in plain language to those who wish to express a view.
* The Company will aim to create an atmosphere in which service users feel able to provide various forms of feedback on the service they recieive.
* Staff are trained to respond correctly to complaints of any kind. Complaints policy training is included in the induction training for all new staff and updated as indicated by any changes in the policy and procedures and in the light of the experience of addressing complaints.
* The Company will ensure that service users have access to help in making a complaint should they request this. When supported by an appropriate person, that person will not attempt to influence the nature or substance of the complaint, but just assist with completing the form.
* Any complaint received will be investigated and responded to within an appropriate timeframe; this will be five working days whenever possible. If this is not possible, then an explanation of the reason will be incorporated into the response when it is made.
* The Company intends to learn from complaints; any learning from them will be incorporated into policies and procedures.
* The Company treat service user complaints differently to service user requests. Requests should be filed either at Reception usign a paper form, or through In-Form with assistance from the service user’s Housing Coach.
* If the service user needs adaptations to the process to accommodate additional needs, e.g., a language service, large print, or communication through a representative, the Company will tailor the process to that individual’s needs.
* If service users wish, the can bring a representative into any complaint related conversation.

**Complaint Handling Process**

* Stage 1: Service user speaks to a member of staff to see whether the problem can be easily and quickly fixed. Staff member will record this in writing for the service user and future records.
* Stage 2: Service user completes a Complaints Form, which can be retreived from Reception, via the company website, or via the QR Code on the back of rooms doors at Gresty Road. Forms are handed back to Reception marked for the HR & Administration Manager.
* Stage 3: HR & Administration Manager receives complaint, passes it on to relevant Manager or Senior Leader for investigation. Within 5 working days, the service user will be notified of the response/ inestigation process.
* Stage 4: If the service user is not happy with the response, they can write to the CEO or leave a note addressed to the CEO at Reception within 5 working days of receiving the response. The CEO will then respond within one week.
* Stage 5: If the service user is not happy with the CEO’s response, they can write to the Chair of the Board (c/o the Company Secretary) within 5 working days of receiving their response. The Chair will then respond within one week, informing them when an Appeals Sub Committee will be able to meet them to discuss the issue.
* If the Appeals Sub Committee is unable to help, the service user can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at 81 Aldwych, London WC2B 4HN, or on 0207 421 3800. Alternatively, they can seek advice from the Citizen’s Advice Bureau on 08444 111 444, or a law centre or solicitor. Law centres or solicitors may charge for this service.

**Responsibility for implementation and monitoring**

* A named person is always responsible for the administration of the procedure.
* Complaints forms are initially given to the HR & Administration Manager, who will pass them to a Team Leader or Senior Manager to investigate and resolve as appropriate.
* The HR & Administration Manager will advise other Senior Managers of content if appropriate.
* The Chief Executive Officer will sign off all complaints once they have been dealt with satisfactorily.

**Reporting**

An annual Board report will be prepared, summarising

* the number of forms received
* the nature of the complaint
* details of responses

Some funders and comissioners require service user complaints to be reported. For example, for the Housing Related Support 16+ Contact with Children’s Social Care, Complaints and Compliments are reported quartly via a Performance Monitoring Framework document.

**External Links**

[The Complaint Handling Code](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/the-code-2024/)

[Housing Ombudsman Complaints Scheme](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/)