**GNFC Nursery**

**POLICIES & PROCEDURES – COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS**

**PURPOSE:**

To establish the policy and procedure of GNFC with regard to compliments, comments and complaints from service users and other stakeholders and how these will be used to improve the range and quality of services.

**RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES:**

* Protection from abuse: vulnerable adults and children
* Health and Safety
* Risk Assessment and Management - Service Uses
* Service Users Charter
* Whistle blowing
* Disciplinary
* Harassment
* Grievance
* Management of Incidents, High-risk Incidents and Emergencies

**INTRODUCTION**

This document contains a policy statement (Part One) and procedural guidance (Part Two). The functions of each are set out briefly below.

**Part One – Policy Statement.**The policy statement sets out the broad framework of principles within which the particular area of work will be carried out. It sets out the organisation’s broad style and approach to the issue, including any aims and guiding principles.

**Part Two – Procedural Guidance.**The procedural guidance sets out the details that staff will require to carry out their duties in this particular area of work. It also sets out the specific tasks involved in undertaking this area of work and identifies who is responsible for carrying them out.

**PART ONE – POLICY STATEMENT**

**AIMS AND PRINCIPLES**

1. GNFC is committed to encouraging service users and stakeholders to come forward with any complaints and comments about the services delivered in order to make sure that quality is protected and service users’ needs are appropriately met.

2. GNFC also undertakes to monitor all comments and complaints to ensure that they are used to improve the range and quality of service delivery on a continuous basis.

3. GNFC will also ensure that all service users, family members and stakeholders have access to clear information on how to voice comments or complaints. Service users in particular will be provided with the support they need in order to make their views known. GNFC will also ensure that no service users are disadvantaged or treated less favourably as a result of complaining or making comments.

4. The Christian ethos of GNFC is to promote open and free dialogue with gentleness and respect in all situations.

**PART TWO – PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE ON COMPLAINTS & COMMENTS**

**RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS FROM SERVICE USERS**

1. If a service user wishes to submit a compliment, comment or complaint about the services, or any other aspect of their experience whilst being supported by GNFC, the individual can do this by speaking with a member of GNFC staff.
2. Should the service user not feel comfortable discussing her complaint with a member of the support team for whatever reason, she can complain to a line manager/management committee member.
3. Once a service user wishing to complain has approached a member of the Support team, the member of staff must first establish if the complaint or comment is a minor matter(informal) which can be rectified simply and without conflict. In such cases, there may be no need to seek a written version of the complaint/comment(formal). This should be discussed and agreed with the person making the complaint/comment. Such cases are most likely to be situations where a service user is requesting a service rather than making a complaint, strictly speaking. The complaint and outcome should be noted on the complaints record pro forma.
4. If the member of staff within the boundaries of her delegated authority can resolve the complaint she should attempt to do so. However, if the complaint cannot be resolved simply or the complaint is about a member of GNFC staff, the line manager/management committee member must lead on resolving the complaint.
5. If the complaint is about the line manager, a member the Management Committee must lead on resolving the complaint.
6. In cases where a member of staff has been approached about a more serious issue that is a complaint, they must establish whether the service user would like assistance in putting her complaint in writing. No pressure should be exerted on her to do this as she may prefer to do it on her own, but she can be offered the opportunity to sit down together and record the complaint – the service user giving the details and the Support Worker recording these details and reading them back for confirmation before asking the service user to sign that the complaint has been recorded correctly and accurately.
7. Whichever member of staff is trying to resolve the complaint, they should follow these guidelines:

* Get clear information from the service user making the complaint about what went wrong and when.
* Ask for her views about how she would like her complaint to be resolved – i.e. what will fix the problem.

1. Service users can submit a formal written complaint, preferably using the specified form, alternatively the individual can submit a complaint by letter or email.
2. If the service user submits a formal complaint in writing, the member of staff who receives it must share the complaint with a member of the management team. GNFC will provide a written acknowledgement within 5 working days of it being received. The timescale that service users can expect to receive a full response and when actions will be completed will vary depending on the nature of the complaint. The initial letter will provide an indication of how GNFC will respond and the likely timescale. If possible, the issues can be resolved within the initial response.  However a written complaint will always be investigated and the outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the complainant within 28 days.
3. In some cases, there may need to be further investigation or meetings to clarify details of the complaint. Service users will be informed of the type of response deemed to be necessary and any investigations.
4. If the complaint is the result of a poor service, or a mistake by GNFC, the member of staff dealing with the complaint must take this up with the organisation to gain agreement on who will rectify the problem and apologise to the service user. If the complaint is considered unjustified by GNFC this should be explained to the service user along with an explanation of the reason.
5. In all cases, the member of staff must reply to the service user letting her know the outcome of her complaint. She should do this in writing but should also be given support in discussing and understanding the situation with a member of staff to ensure that she feels an acceptable resolution has been found.

**If a complaint about GNFC remains unresolved**

1. If, following the above actions, the service user remains dissatisfied with a service which is the direct responsibility of GNFC, the staff member should support her to take her complaint further as specified in this policy and procedure.
2. If the initial complaint was made to a Support Worker but remains unresolved, the line manager/management committee member must review it. If the line manager/management committee member has already been involved previously, the Management Committee must review the complaint.
3. The information they will need to consider regarding the client’s complaint is:

* What the problem is
* What actions have been taken to resolve the problem
* Why the service user remains dissatisfied
* What the service user would consider a satisfactory resolution to her complaint.

1. Once the Management Committee has considered the service user’s complaint, they must explain to her in writing their decision and what the next steps are if she remains unsatisfied. The service user should be offered the same support as described above in discussing and responding to the decision about her complaint.
2. Should the service user remain dissatisfied following the Management Committee’s decision with regard to her complaint, she may make a further complaint to GNFC Directors who will deal with her complaint in line with this policy and procedure on Complaints. The complainant may request a meeting with a panel of three members of the management team. They may bring a person to support them and may request the presence of an independent person to be present. The results of this meeting should be sent to the complainant within two weeks of the meeting.

**DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS FROM STAFF OR VOLUNTEEERS**

1. If a complaint is regarding another staff member and is does not involve risk to other individuals, staff are encouraged to try to follow principles of Matthew 18: 15-17, whereby they should aim to resolve the conflict between themselves initially.
2. If the complaint cannot be resolved this way, the member of staff with a complaint should go directly to the line manager of the staff member concerned and follow the steps set out above. It may be necessary for complaints to be addressed to GNFC’s Management Committee or to the Directors, depending on the seriousness of the situation.
3. Where there are safeguarding concerns or allegations of abuse, this should be reported to the Safeguarding lead immediately, (or in her absence the deputy) who will take the necessary action.
4. If the complaint does not involve a staff member, but is regarding the organisation, management of services or incidents, then the complaint should be addressed to GNFC’s Management Committee or to the Directors, depending on the seriousness of the situation following the above procedure.

**DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS FROM FAMILY MEMBERS OF SERVICE-USERS**

1. As with service-users, the family member will be given the opportunity to discuss concerns to determine if the matter can be resolved informally.
2. The family member will be offered a complaints form and the procedure will be the same as for service users, as stated above.
3. Involvement of the service user in this process will be considered on a case-by case basis and if appropriate.

**DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS**

1. The procedure for dealing with complaints from stakeholders will follow the steps set out above, except that these complaints should be addressed to GNFC’s Management Committee or to the Directors, depending on the seriousness of the situation.

**MONITORING COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS AND USING FEEDBACK TO IMPROVE SERVICES**

1. Each time a formal complaint or comment is made in writing, it should be logged on the record sheet by the member of staff who receives it and is dealing with it.
2. The results of this record should be fed into the complaints form and from there into the following systems and processes:

* Annual business planning where appropriate, particularly in terms of:
* Identifying and prioritising changes and improvements to existing services
* Identifying gaps in service provision
* Service reviews (timing will be dependent on the cycle of review)
* Reviews of policies and procedures

1. The results of the complaints record should also be presented at least annually to:

* The management committee
* Any service user participation organisations.
* The record of the complaint will be kept securely and the number of complaints received in the previous year will be made known to service users.

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