Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

We take all complaints seriously and will use information learnt from them to help us improve what we do and how we do it. Our aim is to resolve issues of dissatisfaction as close to the initial point of contact as possible and to conduct thorough and fair investigations of complaints so that, where appropriate, we can make evidence-based decisions on the facts of each individual case.
Resolving complaints early saves time and resource will contribute to the continued positive experience of those involved.

This procedure does not apply to any complaints made by employees as these employee complaints will be handled in accordance with SYEP's Grievance

Policy

When children, young people, parents, volunteers, and staff are unhappy it is vital to have an agreed procedure to deal with the issues fairly and in a documented way.

SYEP will ensure:

- Any complaint will be taken seriously and referred a Senior Youth worker or the Youth Operations Manager.
- If the complaint is about Operations Manager, it will be passed to a member of the trustees .
- The person making an official complaint will receive written acknowledgement of their complaint within five working days including details of how it is being dealt with
- Within 20 working days the person making the complaint will receive resolution or details of what has happened so far
- If there are delays to resolving the issues the person making the complaint will be kept as fully informed as possible.

What is a complaint?

A complaint may be defined as: 'An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more individuals about the standard of service, action or lack of action by or on behalf of the Charity.' A complaint may relate to:

- the quality and standard of service
- failure to provide a service
- the quality of facilities or resources
- treatment by or attitude of, a staff member, freelancer or contractor
- inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, freelancer or contractor
- the failure of the Charity to follow an appropriate policy or procedure
- fundraising activities undertaken by the charity,

This list is not exhaustive.

Where a complaint is made by anyone about an employee, the response will be handled in accordance with this procedure, but the employee's performance should be assessed in accordance with the separate Disciplinary procedures.

SYEP will:

- Ensure that this policy is available to all users of SYEP's services.
- Ensure that anybody wishing to complain can do so in a safe environment in which everyone's views are treated with respect and dignity.
- Acknowledge all complaints and respond to those requiring a response.
- Deal with all complaints promptly, fairly, sensitively and appropriately.
- Take all complaints seriously and deal with them in accordance with the organisation's procedures;
- Provide employees involved in responding to complaints with appropriate training
- Ensure that no-one who makes a complaint or criticism is treated less favourably, victimised or harassed in any way by an employee; any such behaviour will lead to disciplinary action;

SYEP do not expect employees to tolerate unacceptable behaviour by anybody making a complaint and will take action to protect its employees from abusive, offensive or threatening behaviour.
SYEP will review complaints on a regular basis to identify trends and apply appropriate learning.
Anonymous complaints - If an anonymous complaint contains serious allegations, it should be referred to a senior member of staff immediately. Complaints submitted anonymously will be considered if there is enough information in the complaint to enable the SYEP to make further enquiries. If an anonymous complaint does not provide enough information, SYEP may not take further action. However, SYEP may give consideration to the issues raised, and will record the complaint so that corrective action can be taken as appropriate. Any decision not to pursue an anonymous complaint must be authorised by a senior youth worker or Operations Youth Manager

Time limit for making complaints
Complaints should be raised with SYEP as soon as problems arise to enable prompt investigation and swift resolution. The time limit is 6 months to raise a complaint, starting from when the complainant first became aware of the problem, unless there

are special circumstances for requesting consideration of a complaint beyond this time. Beyond the six-month time limit, SYEP will exercise discretion in the way that the time limit is applied.

Procedure

The procedure is intended to provide a quick, simple and streamlined procedure with a strong focus on early resolution.
The procedure involves up to two stages,

Stage 1 - Frontline Resolution seeks to resolve straightforward complaints swiftly and effectively at the point at which the complaint is made, or as close to that point as possible.

Stage 2 - Complaint Investigation is appropriate where a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of frontline resolution, or where frontline resolution is not possible or appropriate due to the complexity or seriousness of the case.

Serious complaints will be assessed by the Chair of trustees as soon as possible who will advise on the action required depending on the complexity and urgency of the complaint and taking into account Data Protection regulations.

Stage 1

For issues that are straight forward and easily resolved or required little investigation Addressed by a Senior Youth Worker. On the spot apology, explanation or other action to resolve the complaint quickly. (Unless under exceptional circumstances this 5 working days or less)

Complaint details, outcome and action taken should be recorded and used for ongoing service improvements as appropriate.

Stage 2

For issues that are complex, serious or high risk. A definitive response should be provided within 20 days following a thorough process of investigation.

Complainants who remain dissatisfied after an investigation has been completed have the right to a review by a Trustee.
Responses to complaints will include an appropriate level of detail, taking into account the nature of the complaint and any legal or confidentiality issues, but should normally include, as appropriate, details of the actions SYEP has taken, or will take, as a result of the investigation into a complaint, an explanation of why it

acted as it did if the complaint is about a specific incident, or an apology if it got something wrong.

Members of staff to whom complaints are made will consider some key questions:

- Is this a complaint or should the individual be referred to another procedure?
- What specifically is the complaint (or complaints) about? Complaints should preferably be in writing. I that cannot happen made a note and read back to the complaint for their agreement to the substance of their complaint.
- What outcome is the complainant hoping for and can it be achieved?
- Is this complaint straightforward and likely to be resolved with little or no investigation?
- Can the complaint be resolved on the spot by providing an apology /explanation / alternative solution?

If the timescales have to be extended the complainant will be informed.

I confirm that I have read and understood the Complaints Policy and Procedure. I agree to follow this policy in my work with SYEP.

Signature: ……

Name in capitals……

Date: ……

Signature of manager: ……

Name of Manager in capitals ……

Date:……