

Respect Phoneline complaints policy

Respect is committed to providing services of high quality in a non-discriminatory way. It is our policy to take all complaints seriously and to ensure that they are promptly investigated at an appropriate level. We are also committed, whenever possible, to act to reduce the likelihood of recurrence of similar problems.

The procedure outlined below is intended to be used when an agency or individual wishes to complain about the quality of the service they have received on the Respect Phoneline.

Procedure

1. We encourage service users wishing to complain, to submit their complaint as soon as possible after their contact with the helpline. Complaints about the service received by phone are more likely to be investigated as soon after the call took place as possible. Our Advisors deal with a large volume of calls every day and it is very difficult to remember details of each call and be able to report on the interaction.
2. Anybody wishing to complain should initially be encouraged to contact the Team Leader by telephone, letter, or email. The Team Leader will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and explain the complaints procedure within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.
3. The Team Leader will attempt to resolve the matter informally.
4. If the Team Leader is not able to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction or if the complaint is about the Team Leader, then the complainant should be invited to register a formal complaint with the Head of Services of Respect by telephone, letter, or email within fifteen days.

5. The Head of Services will appoint an investigating officer (in most cases the investigating officer will be the Head of Services themselves) and let the complainant know who will investigate the matter and what the timetable is within five working days of receiving the complaint.

6. After investigation, the investigating officer will reply to the complainant with the outcome within ten working days and if this is not possible the investigating officer will explain why to the complainant and let them know when they can expect a reply by.

7. In considering the matter the investigating officer should ensure that every opportunity is given to the complainant and the relevant staff to explain and clarify their case.

8. If the complaint is upheld, this could result in re-training the staff involved or disciplinary proceedings.

9. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after investigation, he or she can appeal to the Chair of Respect's Management Board. The appeal process is as follows:

- Complainants must submit their appeal within five working days of receiving the investigating officer's reply;
- The appeal will be sent to the investigating officer and complainants need to state the reasons why they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation;
- Complainants need also state their explicit consent that the investigating officer will pass their contact details and the details of their interaction with the helpline to the Chair of Respect's Management Board for the sole purpose of dealing with the appeal. The Chair will take extra care ensuring any information identifying complainants is kept secure and confidential.
- The Chair may delegate the appeal process to other Board members.
- After consideration of the appeal the decision of the Chair (or the Board member considering the appeal) will be final and there will be no further recourse to appeal.
- The complainant will be informed of the final decision within a month.

10. The Team Leader will maintain an electronic complaints file, which records the details of all complaints and the results of the investigations. Any records containing sensitive information and/or identifying service users will be kept secure and confidential for twelve months and will then be disposed of in a secure manner.

11. Respect will ensure that Helplines staff are aware of the complaints policy so that callers who wish to complain have all the information they need to do so. Complaints made against the Respect Phoneline will be used to improve and further develop the service offered.

Reviewed: September 2017

Next review date: September 2020