

TURN **AROUND**

COMPLAINTS POLICY

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1. Turnaround's Vision, Values, Mission and Aims

Our Vision

Our vision is an inclusive community where everyone has hope and opportunity.

Our Goals

- To help people who are serving sentences, in prison or in the community, to turn around their futures.
- To turn around the wider community, encouraging others to support people on their journey.

Our Values

WE CREATE OPPORTUNITY

Each of us has opportunities to learn, grow and play a part in our community. We work to enable, encourage and support each other by creating opportunities for people to build new futures.

WE NURTURE HOPE

Each of us is more than our pasts. We use our past experiences to guide us and strengthen us, but we don't allow them to define us or limit our futures.

WE RESPECT EACH OTHER

Each of us should be treated with respect and dignity. Whatever our backgrounds, we value each other, respect differences, and work together to achieve our goals.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO INCLUSION

Each of us has strengths and has a positive contribution to make within our community. We all learn from each other and use our experiences to improve our own and other people's futures.

2. General policy statement

- 2.1. The Turnaround Project is committed to providing a good standard of quality services to the people we aim to support, other agencies and organisations. We take seriously any concern or complaint and will look into any complaint promptly, seeking suitable resolution as quickly as possible.
- 2.2. The Turnaround Project recognises that all those who come in contact with our services including transitional employees, volunteers, statutory or other agencies, clients, customers and other organisations have the right to raise concerns or complaints about our services and should always have access to clear information on how to voice complaints and concerns.

- 2.3. To that end, the Turnaround Project's Complaints procedure is open to everyone who receives or requests a service and people acting on their behalf and we will make this policy available to anyone who asks for it.
- 2.4. We will keep records all formal/written complaints and that record will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees. This complaints procedure is a part of the process by which the Turnaround Project monitors quality, effectiveness and compliance with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- 2.5. Although The Turnaround Project strives to ensure high standards, we acknowledge that occasional concerns, problems or complaints may arise. We welcome any feedback from individuals, those that use our services, our stakeholders, funding bodies and anyone who works with us, on all aspects of our services. Feedback is one way in which we can evaluate and improve our work and/or the quality of our services.
- 2.6. All staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees members are required to read, understand and comply with this policy and its procedures.

3. Aims of the complaints policy

- 3.1. The complaints policy and procedure aims to ensure:
 - That those that engage with the Turnaround Project know how to raise a concern or make a complaint and how that concern or complaint will be handled
 - That any concern or complaint raised will be dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within a clear time frame
 - That complaints will be reviewed as one way in which we seek to improve our services.
 - Complaints or concerns are carefully considered and kept confidential where appropriate.
- 3.2. In line with the principles of this policy, the Turnaround Project will...:
 - Consider all complaints received equally and fairly
 - Record, store and manage all formal/written complaints accurately and in accordance with the Data protection Act 1998.
 - Investigate complaints fully, objectively and within stated time frames
 - Notify a complainant of the results of any investigation as a result of their complaint, and any right of appeal if they disagree with the response or decision
 - Inform a complainant of any action to prevent reoccurrence that has resulted from their complaint
 - Report at least on an annual basis, the number of formal/written complaints received, the outcomes and any actions taken.

4. Definition of a complaint

- 4.1. A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, whether justified or not.

- 4.2. An individual may make a complaint if they feel that the Turnaround Project has:
- Failed to provide a service to an acceptable standard
 - Made an error or mistake in the way the service was provided
 - Failed to act in an appropriate way when dealing with a person engaged in our services, a customer, client or other stakeholder
 - Provided an unfair service.

5. Concerns and complaints

- 5.1. Taking informal concerns seriously at an early stage encourages timely resolutions and reduces the likelihood of concerns developing into formal/written complaints.
- 5.2. If anyone has any concerns about the Turnaround Project's work or services, they should alert a Supervisor, Manager, or the Head of Operations as soon as possible, this will provide opportunity to understanding any concern and take prompt action to resolve this concern where appropriate.
- 5.3. The most immediate supervisor or manager will usually deal with any minor concerns or problems raised about the operation of, or services provided by, the Turnaround Project or its enterprises. That person will seek to resolve the concerns informally where appropriate and where that satisfies the complainant.
- 5.4. The Turnaround Project will aim to resolve any issues raised at the earliest possible opportunity, informally, through discussion, negotiation and/or apology where applicable.
- 5.5. Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, or if there is a more serious issue or complaint, the formal procedure below exists to help ensure that the concern can be dealt with fairly and appropriately.
- 5.6. Where a matter is not resolved, or in the case of a more serious issue or complaint, the complaint should be put in writing and forwarded to the Head of Operations (if the complaint concerns the Head of Operations then the complaint should be raised with the Director).
- 5.7. A formal/written complaint should be made within three months of any event, occurrence or instance of dissatisfaction.
- 5.8. Where a person is unable to make a complaint in writing, the person may make the complaint orally, if raised orally a record of the conversation will be made and read back to the individual.

6. Anonymous complaints

- 6.1. As complaints are dealt with confidentially, it is advised that a complainant does not make a complaint anonymously as this is likely to limit the scope of investigation and resolution available.
- 6.2. If an anonymous complaint is received, the Head of Operations has the discretion to decide whether or not it should be investigated, according to the available facts, the seriousness of the complaint and the potential for malice.

7. Complaints Procedure

7.1. There are three stages to the complaint's procedure:

- Stage One – the complaint
- Stage Two – investigation
- Stage Three – appeal

7.2. Stage One – Complaint

7.2.1. The complainant makes a complaint in writing (or if the individual is unable to put the complaint in writing they can tell someone at the Turnaround Project who will make a written record of the complaint on their behalf, the written record will be read back to the complainant). The complainant should sign and date the complaint. The complaint should include:

- The complainant's name and address
- The nature and date of the complaint/occurrence
- Desired resolution

7.2.2. The complaint should be emailed to the Head of Operations lauren.kendall@theturnaroundproject.org or forwarded by post to Head of Operations, 39 North Street, Belfast, BT1 1NA.

7.2.3. On receipt, each complaint will be allocated a reference number and logged on the complaints register.

7.2.4. An acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within 5 working days of receipt.

7.3. Stage Two – Investigation

7.3.1. A written complaint will usually be dealt with by the Head of Operations.

7.3.2. If a meeting with the complainant is felt necessary, a request will be made either in writing or by telephone within 5 working days of receiving the written complaint.

7.3.3. Complaints will be fully investigated. When the investigation is complete, a written response provided to the complainant within 10 working days.

- The written response will include the following:
 - Confirmation of the outcome of any investigation
 - Any recommendations/remedies made (such as review of policies, staff development, training or appropriate improvement to services).
 - Where the complaint is upheld an apology will be offered.
 - Information on how to appeal the response should the complainant remain dissatisfied including:
 - Name of person to direct the appeal to (usually the Director)
 - Timescale to make appeal – usually 15 days working days from the date of the outcome response.

7.3.4. Occasionally investigations may take longer, particularly if the complaint is complex. Should this be the case, a holding response will be sent after ten

working days from date of receipt of the complaint, with an estimated date upon which a conclusion may be reached.

7.3.5. After response is issued, the complaints register will be updated, and any pending complaints flagged for follow up.

7.4. Stage Three – Appeal

7.4.1. If the complaint cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at stage two, or if the manager feels that the complaint is of a very serious nature, or concerns a service leader then it will be referred to the Director.

7.4.2. If the complaint is about the Director then the complaint will be discussed with two Trustees.

7.4.3. An acknowledgement of receipt of the appeal will be made within 5 working days of receipt.

7.4.4. The Director/Trustees will review the Stage Two investigation and recommend one of the following actions within ten working days (from the date the complainant stated they wanted to take the complaint to stage 3):

- Uphold the action taken at Stage Two
- Make changes to the Stage Two recommendation/actions

7.4.5. The complainant will then be informed in writing of the outcome of stage three.

7.4.6. The decision reached about a complaint made at Stage 3 is final. The Director/Trustees may offer the following options as available to the complainant:

- Seek advice from a solicitor
- Contact with Citizens Advice Bureau/Advice NI

8. Data protection

8.1. In handling any complaint received by the Turnaround Project, it will be necessary to hold personal data about the complainant that is provided by the complainant and data which other people provide through the process of investigation and response. The Turnaround Project will hold this data securely and only use it to address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and will not be revealed to other people or made public.

8.2. It may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applied or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties, where illegal acts are disclosed or where a complaint reveals a safeguarding concern.