

## Complaints Policy

Authored by Directors

Last Reviewed : Sept 2023

Next review : Sept 2024



## **Our Commitment**

Dorset Wellbeing believe that all feedback, both positive and negative, is invaluable in helping us to evaluate our performance and continue to improve.

As an organisation, we strive for the highest standards in all areas including our provision delivery, contact with others and the use of our sites.

This includes us actively welcoming feedback from children and young people, parents/carers, stakeholders and other agencies we work with and reacting to any complaints receptively with a view to positive outcomes for all.

## **This Document**

- Defines the role and responsibilities of individuals in the organisation
- Applies to all people who work for and with Dorset Wellbeing, including our staff, stakeholders, volunteers and contractors
- Supports our aims as an organisation
- Is based on current legislation, government guidance and best practice. The documents are referenced at the end of the policy
- Contains the relevant contact details at the end of the policy

## **Obligations**

Dorset Wellbeing aim to provide individuals with a fair and effective way to give feedback and to feel able and supported to complain about the service provided should they feel this is necessary.

Comments and complaints are welcome on any aspect of our provision, policy and practice, accessibility and services or the way an individual has been treated.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Dorset Wellbeing Directors will ensure complaints are investigated fully and objectively and are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear time frames. They will ensure that complaints are logged, monitored and that this information is used to improve services.

Directors will regularly review the number of complaints received, the outcome of investigations and any actions taken/needed.

The Oversight Committee will scrutinise that data and the complaints log. Directors will be receptive to discussing change and development as required.

Complaint statistics will be listed on our website for transparency.

All staff will be briefed on, and know how to accept comments and provide direct feedback to informal complaints where appropriate, but also be clear about when a complaint needs to be passed on to Directors for consideration and be aware of how it will be handled.



## Our Procedure

Dorset Wellbeing aim to settle the majority of complaints quickly and satisfactorily. The complaint may be resolved by way of an apology, by adapting or improving the situation, or by providing a reasonable explanation to the individual.

We will always listen carefully to complaints and treat them confidentially, where possible.

We will take complaints seriously at the earliest stage to reduce the potential for them to develop into formal complaints.

Formal written complaints will be acknowledged within five working days, and when further investigation is required, responded to within 28 working days by the Directors.

All complaints should be formalised by email to [office@dorsetwellbeing.org](mailto:office@dorsetwellbeing.org)

We will notify the individual making the complaint of the progress and outcome of the investigation and provide any update where necessary, informing them of any subsequent changes to policy, practice, educational services or the treatment of an individual to ensure that there is no recurrence.

In the event that the individual making the complaint is dissatisfied by the Directors' response, they have the opportunity for their complaint to be considered by an Independent Complaints Panel.

The individual making the complaint will need to write a formal request to invoke this option and this request must be made within 10 days of the Directors' response.

Dorset Wellbeing will then acknowledge the request within 5 working days and endeavour to convene the Complaints Panel hearing as soon as possible to consider the matter, normally no later than twenty days after receipt of the written notice, dependent upon the availability of the Panel members.

The Complaints Panel will consist of a Director who has not previously been involved in the complaint, one member of the Oversight Committee and one other person independent of the management and running of Dorset Wellbeing.

The following are entitled to attend a hearing, submit written representations and address the Panel:

- a. The complainant and/or one representative;
- b. The Directors of Dorset Wellbeing and/or one representative; and
- c. Any other interested person whom the Complaints Panel considers to have a reasonable and just interest in the complaint and whose contribution would assist the Panel in their decision-making.

NB: Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

Where the Complaints Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. In such cases all parties will be given the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Panel in support of their position, including



- Documents in support of complaint(s)
- Chronology and key dates relating to complaint(s)
- Written submission setting out the complaint(s) in more detail

This evidence will be considered by the Panel, along with the initial information that was sent. It is for the Panel to decide how to conduct the proceedings of the appeal, which should be reasonably informal so that all parties can present their case effectively. If possible, the Panel will resolve the complainants' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision, and may make recommendations, which it will complete within ten working days of the hearing. The decision reached by the Complaints Panel is final. Any decision reached that may have financial implications for Dorset Wellbeing will need the appropriate approval from the Directors, although any such approval must be compatible with the decision of the Complaints Panel. Dorset Wellbeing will keep a record of all panel hearing minutes, decisions and recommendations of the Complaints Panel and this record will be kept for one year after the date of resolution.

### **Procedure in summary**

#### Stage One - Informal Resolution

Complaint or issue raised orally with staff

Is the issue resolved?

NO > Issue or complaint not resolved, move to stage two

YES > No further action

#### Stage Two - Formal Resolution

Complaint or issue raised in writing to the Directors

Is the issue resolved?

NO > Issue or complaint not resolved, move to stage three

YES > No further action

#### Stage Three – Panel Hearing

Complaint or issue referred to Independent Complaints Panel

NO > The decision reached by the Complaints Panel is final

YES > No further action

### **Data protection**

Dorset Wellbeing will record, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We will hold personal data about an individual making a complaint (which they have provided) securely and it will only be used to help address the issue raised.

The identity of the person making a complaint will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public by Dorset Wellbeing. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in

some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies or allegations are made that involve the conduct of third parties.

We will abide by the Data Protection Act and will destroy our complaints records in a secure manner one year after the complaint has closed.



## Complaints Record

Formal complaints received in the last academic year: None

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of the complaints procedure and policy can be measured both day to day and more strategically.

### 1. Ongoing monitoring/evaluation

Feedback from our children and young people, finding the degree to which they feel satisfied

Feedback from our fellow professionals and parents/carers, finding the degree to which they feel their children and young people are satisfied

Feedback from staff in supervision, training sessions and appraisals as well as through questionnaires.

Record of Complaints

### 2. Strategic monitoring/evaluation:

Formal review of Complaints reported to the Directors through the Oversight Committee.

## Contact details

Dorset Wellbeing Directors

Helen Rosaline / Os Filmater and Yvonne Hampshire [office@dorsetwellbeing.co.uk](mailto:office@dorsetwellbeing.co.uk)

Oversight Committee [oversight@dorsetwellbeing.org](mailto:oversight@dorsetwellbeing.org)

## Referenced documents and links

[The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#)