Complaints Policy

1. Introduction: about this policy

1.1 CASSPLUS is committed to delivering high-quality services and treating everyone with dignity, respect, and fairness.

1.2 We recognise that sometimes things go wrong. When this happens, we want to know so we can put things right and learn for the future.

2. Purpose: who does this apply to?

2.1 This policy outlines CASSPLUS's approach to managing complaints; and our approach to monitoring complaints and how they will be used to improve the quality of our service

2.2 This policy applies to all complaints received from:

- Clients and former clients
- Family members or advocates
- Partner agencies
- Volunteers, staff, or members of the public.
- Prevent and address all forms of discrimination.

3. Scope and accountability: who is responsible for this policy?

3.1 Our Board of Trustees (Board) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. The Board has delegated responsibility for

overseeing its implementation to the CASSPLUS Chief Executive and Operations Manager. Questions about the content of this policy or suggestions for change should be reported to the Chief Executive.

This complaints Policy is relevant to the following roles:

- All CASSPLUS employees, trustees, volunteers and contractors.
- All service users and those engaging with our programmes or events.
- All aspects of our operations including recruitment, service delivery, governance, training and partnership work.

4. Our commitments

4.1 CASSPLUS are committed to;

- Making it easy to raise concerns or complaints
- Responding quickly, fairly and respectfully
- Ensuring that no one is treated differently for making a complaint
- Learning from complaints to improve our service

5. Guiding principles

5.1 CASSPLUS recognises that many clients have lived experience of trauma. Our process is designed to be sensitive and supportive

5.2 We will adapt our processes where necessary to meet communication, cultural or support needs

5.3 All complaints will be handled in line with our Confidentially and Data Protection policies

5.4 We aim to resolve complaints impartially and to keep all parties informed throughout.

6. What is a complaint?

6.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about:

- The service you have received
- A staff member, volunteer or organisational representative
- A policy decision or action taken by CASSPLUS

6.2 If concerns are raised to CASSPLUS regarding a staff member, volunteer or organisational representatives conduct outside of the workplace, this information will not be treated as a complaint but will be reviewed and managed in line with our Conduct and Capability policy.

6.3 Complaints may be about something that has happened, failed to happen, or has been handled inappropriately

7. How to make a complaint

7.1 In many cases, concerns raised to CASSPLUS can be addressed informally by speaking to the relevant staff member or their line manager.

7.2 In these circumstances, the matter will be brought to the attention of the person the complaint is regarding, and they will be given the opportunity to provide their response.

7.3 If you do not feel comfortable raising this matter informally, or are not satisfied with the outcome, you can make a formal complaint.

7.4 Formal complaints can be made by;

- Completing a complaints form see Annex A
- Emailing us admin@cassplus.org.uk
- Telling a staff member who will record your complaint for you

7.4 Complaints should ideally be made within three months of the issue occurring

8. Complaints process

8.1 Stage 1 – initial investigation

- Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days
- It will be assigned to an appropriate manager for investigation
- You will receive a written response within 15 working days, including the outcome and any actions taken.

8.2 Stage 2 – Review

- If you are not satisfied with the response, you can request a review by a senior manager or trustee within 10 working days of receiving the stage 1 outcome
- A review will be conducted within 20 working days
- You will receive a final written response and any further actions proposed

9. Safeguarding or serious allegations

9.1 If your complaint involves:

- Abuse or risk of harm
- Criminal behaviour
- Serious misconduct

It will be escalated immediately to the CEO and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – External authorities may be contacted where appropriate.

10. Record keeping and monitoring

10.1 CASSPLUS will ensure all complaints are handed in line with our confidentiality and data protection policies.

10.2 We will keep a secure record of the nature of the complaint, actions taken, communication and outcomes and lessons learnt.

10.3 Complaint data is reviewed by the senior management team and trustees to identify themes and drive improvements.

11. Unreasonable or vexatious complaints

11.1 CASSPLUS will always aim to respond respectfully. However, where a complaint it repeatedly made without grounds, or includes aggressive, abusive behaviour, we may restrict further contact

11.2 Any such decisions will be explained in writing.

12. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by legislation or operational need.

Annex A

Complaints form

You can complete this form to make a formal complaint. If you need support, please ask a staff member or advocate for help.

Complaints Form

Section 1: Your details

Name:

.....

Address:

.....

.....

Phone Number:

.....

Email Address:

.....

Preferred Method of Contact:

☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ Post ☐ Other (please specify): .....

Are you making this complaint on behalf of someone else?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide their name and relationship to you:

.....

Section 2: About the complaint

Date(s) of the incident or issue:

Please describe what happened and what your complaint is about:

Have you tried to resolve this informally?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what was the outcome?

What would you like to happen as a result of this complaint?

Section 3: Access and support needs

Do you require any support or adjustments (e.g. large print, advocate)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify:

Section 4: Declaration

I confirm that the information provided is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:

.....

Date:

.....

How to submit your complaint

- By Email: admin@cassplus.org

We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days.