

COMPLAINTS

Policy & Procedure



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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this policy is to promote satisfaction with the service offered by Getting Heard and to identify areas for improvement. Suggestions which would help with this are welcomed.

The Complaints policy is a formal mechanism for concerns or significant issues to be raised so that the organisation can address them, learn from them and improve the quality of the service provided. There will be instances where the individual does not wish to make a formal complaint but wishes to raise an issue or significant concern with a member of Getting Heard. In all instances these will be fully investigated by the appropriate member of staff and/or Trustee(s). It is expected that in the first instance those concerned should try to resolve any issues or complaints informally, but where they are unable to do so they should be advised to make a formal complaint.

2. PROCEDURE

1.1 Informal Process

Issues of concern relating to an individual's experience of Getting Heard, should initially be raised with the relevant staff member and the Director. The Director together with the relevant staff member(s) will immediately investigate the issue/concern in a courteous and efficient manner and take any corrective action required. The Director will keep the complainant fully informed throughout the process, the outcome of the investigation and any action taken. Information relating to the issue will be recorded.

1.2 Formal Process

1.2.1 Stage 1

Where a formal complaint is made regarding the action of any person in Getting Heard or the service provided this should be raised with Director. The complaint may be made in writing or orally.

- (a) If the complaint is of a serious nature, or relates to the Director, the complainant should inform the Chair of Getting Heard who will make a decision about the most appropriate person within the organisation to undertake the investigation.

- (b) If a complainant wants help in making a complaint either verbally or in writing help can be given, including if needed, identifying an independent person to assist.
- (c) A complaint will be formally acknowledged within seven days in writing and the next steps outlined.
- (d) Any member of staff or volunteer against whom a complaint is made, should be kept informed and have an opportunity for their views to be taken into consideration.

1.2.2 **Stage 2**

The Director or Chair will institute an investigation into the complaint. This will be carried out by two members of the organisation who will respond to the complainant with the findings within 28 days. Any delay in this process will be explained to the complainant.

1.2.3 **Stage 3**

- (a) If a complainant is not satisfied with the response he/she must inform the Chair of Getting Heard within 28 days. The Chair and two other members of the Getting Heard Management Committee, who have not been involved with the investigation, will then review the complaint and Getting Heard's response. The complainant will receive a response within 28 days. Any delay in this process will be explained to the complainant.
- (b) Written records of all complaints and significant concerns raised will be fully recorded and will comply with Getting Heard's recording policy. The information, where relevant, will inform policy development and improve practice. The records will be kept and, where they are in relation to a service that is provided under contract to OCC, all the information will be made available to the Nominated Officer as stated in the contract.

1.2.4 **Stage 4**

If at the end of this process the complainant is still not satisfied he/she is at liberty to contact the Charity Commission with whom Getting Heard is registered under its formal name Oxfordshire Advocacy.

3. INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLAINTS POLICY

If you are unhappy with anything about your Advocacy Service you should first of all talk to your Co-ordinator, or you can telephone the office and leave a message asking the Co-ordinator to contact you. (Their name and address is on your Partnership Agreement Form and on the list below).

If they can't sort out the problem and you then wish to make a complaint, you can write to the Director or Chairperson of Getting Heard at the address below, who will arrange for your complaint to be investigated and write back to you within 28 days.

If you are still unhappy with the answer you can write again and say so, and your complaint will be looked at again, and you will get an answer within 28 days.

If you are still not satisfied please contact the Charity Commission at the address below.

A copy of the Getting Heard Complaint Procedure is available from your Co-ordinator.

Addresses and Telephone Numbers:

The Chairperson – contact Getting Heard, Barton Neighbourhood Centre, Headington, Oxford, OX3 9LS or phone 0300 343 5718 or email office@gettingheard.org

The Director - contact Getting Heard, Barton Neighbourhood Centre, Headington, Oxford, OX3 9LS or phone on 0300 343 5718, or email to office@gettingheard.org

The Charity Commission
Harmsworth House, 13-15 Bouverie Street, London EC4 8DP

It is alright to ask someone to help you who is not involved with your Advocacy Service if you wish to make a complaint.

What the Complaints Policy means

- If you are not happy with your advocate you can complain.
- You can choose someone to help you with your complaint if you want to.
- You can talk to the coordinator about your problem.
- If there is still a problem you can tell the Director or Chair of Getting Heard (the charity which supports your advocate). You can do this by phoning **0300 343 5718** or writing to us at the address given above. You can ask someone to help you do this. Getting Heard has to answer your complaint within 28 days.
- If you are not happy with the reply, you can complain again to Getting Heard and they must reply within 28 days.
- If they do not answer your complaint properly, you can complain to the Charities Commission (which has to check on the way Getting Heard works) at the address given above.