

COMPLAINTS/FEEDBACK POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Blackthorn Good Neighbours (BGN) is a Registered Charity, and is the employer for the purposes of this policy. References in this policy to “the employer” should be taken in all instances to refer to BGN’. Similarly all references made to ‘Staff’ are to be taken in all instances to refer to all paid employees of BGN.

Scope

The purpose of this document is to set out for all parties concerned BGN policy and procedures for dealing with complaints.

Policy Statement

BGN is committed to providing a range of quality services to individuals, families and children. We believe that all our users are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and concerns.

We value feedback, both positive and negative, on all aspects of our policies, work and services. We see this as important information to use to develop and change the way we operate and perform in order for us to satisfy the needs of our users. Positive feedback shows when we are doing things well.

We recognise that sometimes people may feel that the service they have received from us, or tried to receive from us, may be unsatisfactory. If anyone is unhappy, they have the right to complain, either formally or informally. Making a complaint will not prejudice the right of the complainant to receive services from BGN.

BGN takes complaints seriously. Each complaint will be investigated and dealt with sensitively using an agreed process. BGN will respond to complaints quickly.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the BGN Board of Trustees to ensure that quality services are delivered in accordance with agreed standards and that BGN seeks and responds to feedback. The BGN Manager is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers (including Board of Trustees) are expected to facilitate this process.

Eligibility

Anyone using or trying to use BGN's services can make a complaint. This includes potential, current and past users of the services, volunteers, community and voluntary organisations, statutory bodies, etc.

However, BGN will not respond to anonymous or abusive complaints.

Complaint Methods

Informal Complaints

Informal complaints are usually verbal complaints made by phone or face-to-face but can be made via email or letter. It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved at this level.

BGN will try to resolve informal complaints by talking to or meeting with the complainant to listen to and respond to the concerns raised. This will be the responsibility of the most appropriate worker or manager for the particular complaint. On some occasions further investigation will be needed. If this is the case the complainant will be informed of the timescales involved before the outcome is fed back to the complainant. This should not take longer than 3 weeks unless there are specific circumstances, which delay investigation.

Staff should ensure that a complaint record form is completed and filed in the appropriate place in the filing system. This will hold details of what the complaint was and how it was resolved. These records are kept in order to help the organisation learn from complaints.

At any point in this process the complainant can make a formal written complaint.

Formal Complaints

Formal complaints are written down. Complainants should put their complaint in a letter addressed to the BGN Manager. If a complainant is not able/does not feel able to write the complaint down, a member of staff will do this following a conversation with the complainant. The record of the complaint will then be passed to the BGN Manager.

A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint and advising of timescales for investigation and response will be sent to the complainant within 7 days.

The BGN Manager will investigate the complaint. If this is not appropriate because the Manager is involved in the matter being investigated, a representative from the Board of Trustees will be called to lead the investigation.

A response will normally be made within 3 weeks unless there are specific circumstances, which delay or cause a longer investigation.

The BGN Manager or member of the Board of Trustees, will send a response to the complainant.

Formal complaints and their outcomes should also be summarised on the BGN complaint record form and stored appropriately.

If a complainant is still dissatisfied with the response to their complaint they can write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, outlining their concerns. If the complainant does not feel able to write down their concerns, a member of BGN staff can help with this.

The Chair will carry out further investigation or make a final response as appropriate.

Feeding Back on BGN Services

BGN has in place a number of ways for users of our services to provide feedback (both positive and negative):

- Informally letting service users know they can raise issues with members of staff
- Periodic surveys and feedback forms.

Issues raised through complaints and comments to BGN are discussed at an operational level in Senior Team meetings and recorded for future reference or action involving service delivery or planning.

The BGN Board of Trustees is informed of all complaints received.

Reviewed Feb 2018