

DEPTHERAPY & DEPTHERAPY EDUCATION COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Charity Commission report 'Cause for Complaint' states: 'an effective complaints Management system is a proven way of maintaining and building relationships with the people on whom the charity depends.'

Handling complaints well:

- ✓ Demonstrates your commitment to your clients and other stakeholders
- ✓ Demonstrates your commitment to providing the best possible service
- ✓ Helps you to find out about things that have gone wrong so you can fix them
- ✓ Helps you to prevent things going wrong again in future

Complaints Policy of Deptherapy

Deptherapy views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint, if such action is justified.

Our policy is:

- ✓ To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- ✓ To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- ✓ To make sure everyone at Deptherapy knows what to do if a complaint is received
- ✓ To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- ✓ To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- ✓ To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Deptherapy.

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a genuine and legitimate interest in Deptherapy. A complaint must be made via email.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements. Deptherapy adopts the Caldicott Principles in that we will:

- H**olding information securely and confidentially,
- O**btaining it fairly and efficiently,
- R**ecording it accurately and reliably,
- U**sing it effectively and ethically, and
- S**haring it appropriately and lawfully.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Trustees.

Deptherapy has no employees

Deptherapy has no employees and therefore complaints are likely to be directed at Board members.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on: 19 January 2017

Last reviewed: 13 March 2017

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to Deptherapy at 15 Barnes Way, Iver, Bucks, SL09LZ or by email at ops@dephtherapy.co.uk

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose.

Complaints about Deptherapy must be submitted by email.

Complaints received need to be recorded.

The person who receives a complaint should:

- ✓ Write down the facts of the complaint
- ✓ Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- ✓ Note down the relationship of the complainant to Deptherapy
- ✓ Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- ✓ Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- ✓ Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.
- ✓ Complainants should be referred to complaint@dephtherapy.co.uk where they may formally make their complaint.
- ✓ A log of all complaints will be maintained

Social media and complaints

Board members/ Trustees/ Depththerapy Ambassadors should not participate in discussions around complaints about Depththerapy or its trustees/ dive team on social media. Any apparent complaint being drawn to the attention of the above should be drawn to the attention of the Chair and Board Secretary

Resolving Complaints

Stage 1

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to The Board Secretary within 10 days.

On receiving the complaint, The Board Secretary records it in the complaints Log.

If it has not already been resolved, they delegate a trustee to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within 7 days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 28 days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to Chair or if the complaint is against the chair to a trustee designated by the Board Secretary.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within 7 days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair or the designated trustee must investigate the facts of the case themselves. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the trustee who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond .

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept Informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 28 days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the [Charity Commission](#) at any stage.

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be

Found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. Or where the Board has been made fully aware of the complaint at Stage 1 and has considered the complaint in detail.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Vexatious Complaints

Where the Board of Trustees is of the view, based on the evidence available, that a complainant is vexatious, the Board by resolution declare the complainant vexatious. In consequence of such a resolution by the board the charity will not enter into any further communication with the individual(s) designated vexatious.

Legal Consequences

Without prejudice the Board of Trustees reserves the right to have recourse to the law to protect the charity's reputation or the reputation of its trustees.

Appendix 1 - Practical Guidance for Handling Complaints

- ✓ Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- ✓ Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- ✓ Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- ✓ Show an interest in what is being said
- ✓ Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- ✓ Ask for clarification wherever necessary that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- ✓ Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- ✓ If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- ✓ Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- ✓ Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- ✓ Don't promise things you can't deliver
- ✓ Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- ✓ Make sure that the person understands what they have been told wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal.