

Complaints policy for complaints about the Care Inspectorate

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We regard a complaint about the Care Inspectorate as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.
- 1.2 The establishment of a Care Inspectorate complaints policy and complaint handling procedure outlines our two-stage complaints process, which is compliant with the requirements of the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) model Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP).
- 1.3 Effective complaint management is critical to the successful delivery of our strategic and business objectives. It is especially important to ensure consistent and robust arrangements are established for handling and examining complaints, identifying issues, establishing clear strategies for seeking an appropriate resolution and where possible mitigating risk for the Care Inspectorate. The analysis of qualitative and quantitative information from complaints received across the Care Inspectorate is vital to support service delivery and drive improvement. This customer insight will enable the Care Inspectorate to better understand all sections of its customer base and learn and inform continuous improvement.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Care Inspectorate views complaints as an opportunity to examine and improve service delivery.
- 2.2 This policy and operational complaint handling procedure support our aims to help us 'get it right first time'. We want quicker, simpler and more streamlined complaints handling with local, early resolution by capable, well-trained staff.
- 2.3 The Care Inspectorate complaints policy and our operational complaint handling procedure reflect the commitment to valuing complaints and support the aim to resolve customer dissatisfaction at the earliest opportunity by conducting

thorough, impartial and fair examinations of customer complaints so that, where appropriate, we can make evidence based decisions on the facts of the case.

- 2.4 Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve customer satisfaction. Our complaints handling procedure enables us to address a customer's dissatisfaction and will help to prevent the same problems that led to the complaint from happening again. For our staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of the service user's views and experience, and can highlight problems we may otherwise miss. Handled well, complaints can give our customers a form of redress when things go wrong, and can also help us continuously improve our services.
- 2.5 Resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity saves money and creates better customer relations. Sorting complaints out as soon as possible means we can deal with them locally and quickly, so they are less likely to escalate to the next stage of the procedure. The complaints policy and operational complaint handling procedure will help us do our job better, improve relationships with our customers and broader stakeholders and enhance public perception of the Care Inspectorate. It will help us keep the customer at the heart of the process, while enabling us to better understand how to improve our services by learning from complaints.

3. Objectives of the policy

- 3.1 Our aim is to develop an approach to complaints management that embeds a consistent methodology across the entire Care Inspectorate.
- 3.2 We aim to ensure that the procedure designed to manage complaints is intrinsically built into everyday business practices. This is described in more detail in our complaint handling procedures and guidance notes.
- 3.3 Identifying issues, establishing clear strategies for seeking an appropriate resolution and, where possible, mitigating risk for the Care Inspectorate should be an integral part of the culture and way we operate. Where possible, the handling and learning from complaints should be embedded in our operational practices. In this way, seeking early resolution to issues and managing complaints effectively is not the responsibility of senior management alone, but more appropriately the responsibility of all colleagues.
- 3.4 In order to achieve Care Inspectorate awareness and to help manage the delivery of our business objectives in an effective manner, we aim to:
 - promote a Care Inspectorate-wide, customer-focused culture
 - view complaints as an opportunity to resolve dissatisfaction at the earliest opportunity where possible
 - adopt a uniform approach to the management of complaints that is captured through the performance management system

- ensure that management decisions taken are informed by the complaints we receive and learning from complaints is communicated effectively across the Care Inspectorate
- encourage all staff to consider how their work practices can contribute towards a favourable approach to the effective management of complaints
- ensure that the members of the Senior Management Team take individual responsibility, championing the opportunity to learn from complaints received across the Care Inspectorate and within their separate areas of operation
- focus on the opportunities that the effective management of complaints can provide.

4. Care Inspectorate benefits

- 4.1 There are many benefits to be gained by embedding effective complaint management into our culture. These include:
- greater focus by the Board and Senior Management Team on the key business issues
 - increased likelihood of business success
 - reduction in management time spent fire fighting
 - reduction in surprise events
 - more internal focus on doing things in the right way to get it right first time
 - greater likelihood of achieving business objectives
 - more informed decision making.

5. Regulatory requirements

- 5.1 We adopt and regularly review best practice in the effective management of complaints. We recognise the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) specific guidance on complaint handling.

6. Related policies

- 6.1 This policy is supported by the operational complaint handling procedure and the policy on unacceptable actions.

7. Policy review

- 7.1 This policy may only be changed or varied with the specific authority of the Senior Management Team.
- 7.2 We will review this policy every three years. More regular reviews will be considered where, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation/policy guidance. Reviews will consider legislative, performance standard and good practice changes.

7.3 We will publish this policy on our website. A paper copy is available on request. Customers can also get a copy of the policy on tape, in Braille, in large print or in translation on request.

8. Equal opportunities statement

8.1 This policy complies fully with our equal opportunities policy. We recognise our proactive role in valuing and promoting diversity, fairness, social justice and equality of opportunity by adapting and promoting fair policies and procedures.

8.2 We are committed to providing fair and equal treatment for all our stakeholders including tenants and will not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, language, religion, belief, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender realignment, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity. We will positively endeavour to achieve fair outcomes for all.

8.3 We carry out equality impact assessments when we review our policies. We check policies and associated procedures regularly for their equal opportunity implications. We take appropriate action to address inequalities likely to result or resulting from the implementation of the policy and procedures.

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