

Everycare believes that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems, service user dissatisfaction and possible litigation. Most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted at a local level between just the complainant and the organisation.

The Complaints Manager will be the person who owns this process and is responsible for ensuring it is followed.

GENERAL POLICIES

All contact with a complainant should be polite, courteous and sympathetic. There is nothing to be gained by staff adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.

At all times staff should remain calm and respectful, and should expect likewise from the complainant.

The services offered by Everycare will not be affected by the fact that the Service User has made a complaint.

Staff should not accept blame, make excuses or blame other staff.

PROCEDURE FOR SPECIFIC COMPLAINT

Stage 1 – Front Line Staff

Front line care staff who receive a complaint should seek to resolve the problem immediately. If staff cannot resolve the problem immediately they should refer the issue on to an Everycare Manager. This must be done as soon as practically possible (and at the very latest by the end of the Care Worker's shift).

Any complaint which has been resolved on the spot must be reported back to the complaints manager with details of the complaint and how it was solved. Again this must be done as soon as practically possible.

Stage 2 – Everycare Manager

When a complaint is referred on to a Manager or is received in writing it should be should be recorded and the complainant contacted by an appropriate manager within 24 hours.

The manager dealing with the complaint should agree a course of action with the complainant and agree a way in which the results of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant (i.e. through another meeting or by letter).

If agreement cannot be reached then the manager should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing to Everycare and refer them to this Policy in the Service User House file.

As part of the investigation the appropriate manager may meet with the complainant to resolve the issues or to obtain further details.

If the complaints manager has not been immediately involved (due to holidays/absence etc.) full details must be passed to her at the earliest opportunity. Resolution of any complaint and the action to be taken must be agreed with her by the manager/staff member handling the issue. Any letter to be sent out as a result of the complaint should also be approved by her.

If the complaint manager or the complainant deems it appropriate the complaint manager will also meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint.

Within 28 days the organisation should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned. Where this is not possible, the complainant should be kept informed of progress and expected timescales when possible.

Stage 3

If the matter is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction or they wish to discuss it further the complainant will be put in contact with the responsible person, Terry Turner. He will contact the complainant within 48 hours of this being requested and arrange a meeting if required, at a time and place of the complainants choosing (if he is unavailable another director will commence the process). Once he has had time to carry out any further investigations he deems appropriate he will also report report back to the complainant in writing or in a meeting whichever is preferred.

Stage 4

If the complainant is not prepared to have the investigation conducted by Everycare, or at any stage indicates that they are dissatisfied with the investigation, they should be advised to contact the Local Government Ombudsman directly.

The Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH.

Phone: **0300 061 0614**
 or **0845 602 1983**

The manager handling the complaint should request that a copy of any complaint sent to CQC is forwarded to the Everycare Office.

Advocates

If the complaint is being made on behalf of the Service User by an advocate it must first be verified that the person has permission to speak for the Service User (preferably in writing) and a copy of the procedure should be forwarded to the complainant. It is very easy to assume that the advocate has the right or power to act for the Service User when they may not.

Complainant Meetings

If a meeting is arranged the complainant should be advised that they may if they wish bring a friend or relative or a representative such as an advocate. If the Service User is unable to find such a person, Everycare will endeavour to find someone from an independent organisation to act as an advocate for them (that is to act in the place of a friend).

At the meeting a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation should be given and also an apology if it is deemed appropriate (apologising for what has happened need not be an admission of liability)

Such a meeting gives Everycare the opportunity to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.

Internal record keeping and review

Details of any complaints, outcomes of investigations and recommendations should be recorded on the Everycare 'Complaints Form', filed in the 'Complaints File' and also the Service User's office file.

Everycare discuss complaints, outcome and actions at weekly management meetings. Everycare's complaints action plan is reviewed by the Management team quarterly.

Serious matters

If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a legal advisor to the organisation and consideration must be given to reporting the issue to the company's insurers.

Should legal action is taken at this stage any investigation by Everycare under the complaints procedure should cease immediately and advice must be sought.