

Women's Aid Integrated Services



COMPLAINTS POLICY

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1. RELATED WAIS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Alcohol & Substance Misuse
- Confidentiality
- Data Protection
- Equality & Diversity
- Grievance
- Involving Service Users
- Lone working
- Professional Boundaries
- Tenancy Management

Approved

Signature

Christine A. Cuckland

Date 17.11.09

Signature

SZCWS

Review Date 17.11.11

2. COMPLAINTS POLICY STATEMENT

WAIS

is committed to providing a good standard of quality services to clients, other agencies and organisations

Will take seriously any comment or complaint and will look into it promptly, for resolution as quickly as possible

recognises that all service users, agencies and organisations

- have the right to raise concerns or complaints about our services**

- have access to clear information on how to voice complaints and comments.**

complaints procedure is open to everyone who receives or requests a service from WAIS, and people acting on their behalf.

produces a standard leaflet outlining this complaints policy and procedure which should be on display and available to anyone who asks for it.

will deal with complaints in line with the WAIS Confidentiality policy

will keep a register of all complaints, which will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees

complaints procedure will be part of the process of monitoring the quality, effectiveness and non-discriminatory nature of its services

All staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees members are required to read, understand and comply with this policy and its procedures

3. INTRODUCTION

WAIS is committed to providing a good standard of quality services to clients and other agencies/organisations that use our services and will encourage both positive and negative feedback on the services provided to ensure that everyone receives the best possible service and also as a way for us to develop future service provision.

Our complaints procedure is open to everyone who receives or requests a service from WAIS, and people acting on their behalf.

WAIS takes all complaints seriously. We would hope that any problems or issues can be resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned in an informal way. However, if this is not the case, this complaints procedure is to let all concerned know what they can do in such a situation and how WAIS will deal with any complaint made.

4. PROCEDURE

This policy does not cover policies or procedures under specific regulations Safeguarding Adults, Safeguarding Children, Employment including Disciplinary and Grievance.

A standard leaflet outlining WAIS's complaints policy and procedure should be on display and available to anyone who asks for it.

WAIS keeps a register of all complaints, whether formal or informal and report on these regularly to the Board of Trustees. All complaints received should be noted on a standard Complaints Form. The complainant, a member of staff with them or receiving the complaint via the telephone will fill out the Complaints Form. See 5 Appendix 1.

WAIS has three stages for complaints:

4.1 Stage 1 – Informal

Complaints can be made in person, over the phone or in writing. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

It is important to establish the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the likelihood of their developing into formal complaints.

Telephone complaint

When the complaint is dealt with over the phone the employee will outline WAIS's procedure, offer to send out a leaflet and note the details on the Complaint Form and send a copy to the Complainant.

WAIS recognises that a complainant who has the opportunity to talk through a complaint, understand the procedures involved and know that WAIS will record and take their complaint seriously, can feel that their complaint is resolved to their satisfaction. It is important that the complainant is reassured that the information given will be treated confidentially but never promise that the information will remain a secret.

Written Complaint – letter, e-mail or complaints form

The complaint is entered onto the register of Complaints.

Service Users will be encouraged to complete the complaint form and will receive reasonable assistance from support staff if necessary

A written acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within 5 working days, which will indicate that the complaint will be investigated and will include:

- that the complaint has been received
- that a response will normally be given
- the person to whom further reference to the comment/ complaint should be made

The date it is received is noted to ensure that WAIS responds to the complaint within 15 working days. Once registered the complaint will be passed on to the Executive Director, who will oversee its progress towards resolution

However if not satisfied after Stage One the complaint will progress to Stage 2.

4.2 Stage 2 - Investigating

All complaints at this stage should be dealt with by a Service Manager. They will meet with the complainant within seven working days of receipt of the complaint to hear the details of the complaint and they will then investigate the matter and find out what happened and why. The investigator will establish clear terms of reference for the investigation and how it will be recorded.

They will send a full reply within fifteen working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. Where the complaint is upheld an apology should be offered and where appropriate, details of any action being taken to ensure that the matter does not happen again.

4.3 Stage 3 – Executive Director and Board of Trustees

If the complaint cannot be resolved to the complainants' satisfaction at Stage 2, or if the manager feels that the complaint is of a very serious nature, or concerns a Service Manager then it will be referred to the Executive Director.

If the complaint is about the Executive Director then the matter will be discussed with two Trustees and the rest of below will apply,

The matter will then be discussed by one Trustee and the Executive Director at a meeting no later fifteen working days (from the date the complainant stated they wanted to take the complaint to Stage 3.

The complainant and/or someone representing them should be invited to this meeting to discuss the complaint but told that they may be asked to leave for part of the discussions.

If a complaint involves a paid or unpaid worker, a decision may be made to deal with the matter under WAIS's disciplinary procedure and any information concerning any internal disciplinary procedures will be confidential.

The complainant should be informed in writing of the result of Stage 3 within seven days of this meeting. The decision reached about this

complaint will then be final but the other options available to the complainant (as listed below) should be detailed in this letter.

4.4 Appeals

If after WAIS has been through the 3 Stages and the complainant is still not satisfied with the result, they should be advised that there is no further right of appeal with WAIS but that they could approach

any of the following agencies for advice:

A solicitor/ Nottingham Law Centre
Citizen's Advice Bureau
Nottingham City Council
Nottinghamshire County Council
Racial Equality Council

It should also be made clear that if the complainant wishes to get advice before making a complaint or at any stage of the procedure, the agencies listed above may be able to advise or support you.

STAFF MEMBER

In certain circumstances it might be appropriate for a staff member to be given other duties, if their presence might affect the investigation or a service user.

Members of staff will be informed of complaints against them. The member(s) of staff will be informed of their rights to consult and be represented by their Trade Union during investigation and further discussion

SERVICE USER

In a refuge situation, if a complaint about the Landlord remains unresolved and the woman remains dissatisfied with a service which is the direct responsibility of the Landlord, the member of staff should be supportive in taking her complaint further as specified in the NCHA Complaints policy and procedure.

MONITOR & REVIEW

The complaint once resolved will be reviewed so that any recommendations for change in WAIS services or procedures can be implemented appropriately. A log of complaints will be kept centrally with brief details and actions undertaken (see appendices). The Board of Trustees will receive a summary of complaints and actions at each Board meeting in order to oversee if there are recurring themes and that the appropriate actions has been taken.

6. LEGISLATION

Data Protection Act	1998
Protection From Harassment Act	1997
Health and Safety at Work Act	1974

6. APPENDIX 1

WAIS Complaints Procedure

WAIS welcomes complaints.

If you're not happy with the service you've received from us, please tell us.

If you are happy with the service you've received, please tell your friends, family, neighbours, work colleagues...

7. APPENDIX 1

CUSTOMER CARE & COMPLAINTS

HOW TO COMPLAIN

This sheet tells you how to make a complaint and the procedure we will follow when dealing with your complaint.

WAIS is run by women for women. WAIS provides support and advice for women and their children experiencing / escaping domestic violence. Despite our best efforts and intentions things can go wrong, and our complaints procedure is there for when you feel we have not achieved the high standard we are committed to. We welcome complaints as a way of putting things right and enabling us to improve our services.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is a report to WAIS Nottingham about poor service from us. It may include:

- *Unhelpful behaviour or unfair treatment by staff
- *Delays or failures to provide a service
- *Failure in the quality of the service provided
- *Dissatisfaction with policies and procedures

Who can complain?

Our complaints procedure is open to everyone who receives or requests a service from WAIS and also people acting on their behalf.

How do I complain?

We would prefer you to put your complaint in writing, as this helps us to collect relevant information to deal with your complaint quickly and effectively. To make this easier we have a Complaints Form that is attached to this leaflet or available from our office.

You can also submit your complaint in person at the office or over the telephone. If you complain in person or by telephone a complaints form will be completed on your behalf and you will be given or sent a copy.

What happens next?

There are three stages for dealing with complaints at WAIS Nottingham.

Stage 1

Either you or someone acting on your behalf should make your complaint in writing, in person or over the telephone. You can ring or call into WAIS Nottingham's offices to complete an Complaint Form and discuss your complaint. All complaints, no matter what stage they are dealt with are recorded and monitored by the Board of Trustees of WAIS Nottingham. If you wish to proceed then you can go to the next stage.

Stage 2

A Service Manager from WAIS Nottingham will arrange to meet you in the next 7 days to investigate your complaint. After they will talk to you about what happened and why and also discuss what you think should happen next. They will write to you within 7 days following the meeting to give you a full reply to your complaint.

Stage 3

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 then you should ask for your complaint to be investigated by the Board of Trustees of WAIS Nottingham. A meeting of no less than 2 Board of Trustees members and Executive Director will be organised within 7 days of receiving your request to go to Stage 3 and you will be invited to this meeting so you, or someone you choose to bring with you to help, can represent your case. You will receive a written response within 7 days of this meeting.

If you have been through our complaints procedure and still remain dissatisfied you can contact:

A solicitor/ Nottingham Law Centre / Citizen's Advice Bureau / Nottingham City Council/

Nottinghamshire County Council/ Racial Equality Council

Once I have made a complaint, can I change my mind?

Yes. WAIS believes that you should be able to make a complaint if you wish. You will not be discouraged from complaining nor treated any less favourably because you have made a complaint. If at any stage however you decide that you do not want to go ahead with your complaint, you should contact a manager to tell them that you wish to withdraw it.

7. APPENDIX 2 MAKING A COMPLAINT

At WAIS we are committed to improving our services and welcome feedback from service users. We recognise that from time to time you may be unhappy about the services provided and may wish to complain. This leaflet tells you how to do this.

All complaints will be taken seriously and treated confidentially. You will not be treated unfairly for making a complaint.

WHAT CAN I COMPLAIN ABOUT?

A complaint is a report to WAIS about poor service from us. It may include:

- Unhelpful behaviour or unfair treatment by staff
- Delays or failure to provide a service
- Failure in the quality of service provided
- Dissatisfaction of policies and procedures

You can use the form on this leaflet to give details of the complaint or to request an

appointment. Staff can help you to fill in the form or contact the Service Manager.

Complaints about the Service Manager should be made to the Executive Director.

Complaints about the Executive Director should be made to the Board of Trustees.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

All complaints will be investigated and you will be told of the outcome and any action to be taken. Should the complaint result in action against staff you will not be told the details for reasons of confidentiality. At the time of making a complaint you will be given a copy of the policy and told how long it will take for you to get a response.

WHAT IF I'M NOT HAPPY WITH HOW MY COMPLAINT HAS BEEN HANDLED?

If you are still unhappy about the complaint once action has been taken, you can appeal. Depending on whom you made the complaint to the process is

- Project Manager
- Executive Director
- Board of Trustees

CAN I CHANGE MY MIND?

Yes. WAIS believes that you should be able to make a complaint if you wish. You will not be discouraged from complaining nor treated any less favourably because you have made a complaint. If at any stage you decide you don't want to go ahead with a complaint you should contact a Service Manager, or the Executive Director to tell them you wish to withdraw.

If you are unsure about whom to make the appeal to, staff will be happy to help you.



7. APPENDIX 2

**WAIS Complaints Form
COMPLETING THIS FORM**

If there is anything that makes it difficult for you to complete this form, for example, if English is not your first language or you have a disability, please contact us on 0115 947 5257.

Your name

I wish to make a complaint about the following (please give brief details)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

I would like an appointment to see the Service Manager

YES/NO (please delete)

Signed

Dated

To contact a Service Manager or member of the Management Committee, write or telephone;

WAIS
30 Chaucer Street
Nottingham
NG1 5LP

0115 9475257

**MARK ENVELOPES
PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

WAIS

COMPLAINTS FORM



7. APPENDIX 3

WAIS

Complaints Log



Name of Service _____

1. Name of complaint

2. Address and contact details of complainant

3. Nature of complaint

4. Manager investigating

5. Details of process

6. Outcome

7. Date Complainant informed of outcome

8. Further notes