CRAWLEY OPEN HOUSE

helping the homeless and disadvantaged

COMPLAINTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

We really value feedback; this policy explains how we will respond when a complaint is raised with us.

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by us, our colleagues, or those acting on our behalf, affecting you or a group of customers

1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

1.1 Crawley Open House recognises that in its efforts to continually strive to improve its service to service users that it may from time to time receive complaints.

1.2 This policy is designed to allow the smooth and thorough investigation of any complaint through a methodical and consistent procedure, taking into account any other legislation relevant to the investigation.

2. SERVICE USERS

2.1 All hostel residents should be made aware of their right to complain during the booking in procedure. A copy of this policy will be available upon request.

2.2 The majority of complaints will be of a minor nature and can easily be dealt with immediately and verbally by intervention of any member of staff.

2.3 All service-users should be asked to make any complaint known to any member of staff who will then use their discretion as to whether or not to advise the service-user to put their complaint in writing.

2.4 We want to hear from everyone. We will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your individual needs and comply with the Equality Act 2010. We will provide an interpreter or British Sign Language interpreter if needed. Please tell us about the adjustments you need if we forget to ask.

2.5 As long as the complainant agrees, we will accept complaints from anyone acting on their behalf. For example, this could be family members, MPs and other organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. We will seek consent from the complainant.

2.6 Should any client need assistance to put their complaint in writing, then any member of staff or designated individual by the service-user can be approached to write their complaint for them, provided the client signs the end of the statement of complaint that it is accurate

2.7 Upon receipt of any written complaint by a client, the hostel manager will carry out an initial investigation and will report their findings to the person concerned where possible within 14 days of receiving the complaint, either verbally or in writing.

2.8 If the client is not happy with the outcome of this initial investigation, then they reserve the right to take the matter to the Senior Management Team who will carry out a more thorough investigation. The outcome of this investigation will be responded to in writing, where possible within 14 days.

3. NON-CLIENTS

3.1 It is possible that we may receive complaints from persons who are not employees or service users, i.e. members of public, visitors to the premises etc. Should this occur, then they should be immediately directed to the Management Team who will discuss the matter and try to resolve matters verbally.

3.2 Non-clients can contact us:

by telephone: 01293 447702
by email: info@cralweyopenhouse.co.uk
by making a complaint in person to any Crawley Open House employee
by writing to us at: Crawley Open House, Stephenson Way, Three Bridges, Crawley, West Sussex. RH 10 1TN
by our website: www.crawleyopenhouse.co.uk

3.3 If the Management Team are unable to resolve matters, then they will be taken to the Senior Management Team who will then carry out an investigation and report back to the complainant in writing as soon as is reasonably practical.

4. STAFF

4.1 Where possible, you should try to settle any grievance informally with your manager at the earliest opportunity. Where any grievance is unable to be resolved informally, this policy sets out the Organisation's Grievance Procedure.

4.2 Your responsibilities

4.3 You have a responsibility to raise any grievances promptly and reasonably, assist Crawley Open House, if required, in any investigation of the matters raised in your grievance, follow the grievance procedure and attend all meetings arranged under it.

4.4 You may raise grievances either informally or formally. If you raise a grievance informally first, you may still raise the grievance formally subsequently if it is not resolved to your satisfaction.

4.5 Crawley Open House aims to deal with all grievances promptly and impartially, and to make all reasonable efforts to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

4.6 You have the right to appeal against a decision Crawley Open House makes in respect of a grievance raised by you. In these cases, Crawley Open House will make every effort for the grievance to be dealt with by a trustee.

4.7 Crawley Open House's decision at the appeal stage is final and there is no further right of appeal.

4.8 Dealing with grievances informally

4.9 If you have any grievance, you should discuss this with your manager in the first instance, who will then attempt to resolve the situation on an informal basis.

4.10 If you feel unable to approach your manager directly, you should approach another manager or a more senior member of the Organisation, who will discuss with you ways of dealing with the matter.

4.11 If attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work, it may be appropriate for you to raise a formal grievance under the following formal procedure.

4.12 Your right to be accompanied at Grievance Meetings

4.13 At all formal stages of this procedure, you are entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or by a trade union official.

4.14 Should you wish to be accompanied, you must notify Crawley Open House of the name and position of your chosen companion as soon as possible.

4.15 Formal procedure

4.16 Crawley Open House will make all reasonable efforts to deal with formal grievances in a fair and consistent manner. While Crawley Open House will make every effort to settle any grievance within the time limits detailed in this procedure, this may not be possible on some occasions.

4.17 You must set out the nature of the grievance, and the full particulars of it, in writing. The written grievance should be submitted to your manager in the first instance, or to the person identified in your contract of employment. If your grievance is against your manager, you should submit it to another manager or a more senior member of the Organisation.

4.18 Attending the Grievance Meeting

4.19 You will be invited to a meeting to discuss the grievance, normally within five working days of Crawley Open House receiving your grievance. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting.

4.20 Prior to the meeting, you should ensure that you are fully prepared to present your grievance, share any supporting evidence and answer any questions relating to the incident/circumstances in question.

4.21 You must notify and obtain the consent of all those present at the meeting if you intend to record it.

4.22 Notification of the outcome

4.23 After the Grievance Meeting, an appropriate period of time may be taken to allow for any further investigation and/or the consideration of all the facts before a decision is reached. Crawley Open House will then, normally, inform you in writing of its decision regarding the raised grievance without unreasonable delay. The letter will also explain your right to appeal against any decision taken.

4.24 Recording of meetings

4.25 Crawley Open House will normally arrange for summary minutes to be taken at any formal meeting. It is not the policy of Crawley Open House to record meetings by any other means (e.g. digital, audio recording and photographs). You (or any party accompanying you) must not record any meeting without the express permission of Crawley Open House in advance. Where a meeting is to be recorded then parties must agree to it in advance. If requested, a copy of the minutes/recording will be provided (in line with data protection principles).

4.26 Appeals against grievance outcomes

4.27 If you are dissatisfied with a decision made regarding a grievance you have raised, you have the right of appeal. Whenever possible, the appeal will be dealt with by a trustee.

4.28 Your appeal must be made in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, to the individual identified in the decision letter.

4.29 This should be submitted no later than the end of the fifth working day after you received written notification. The first of these five working days is the day on which you received written confirmation of Crawley Open House's decision.

4.30 The Appeal Meeting

4.31 Crawley Open House will arrange and hold an Appeal Meeting as quickly as possible, normally within five days. You will be entitled to attend the Appeal Meeting and will be given an opportunity to state your case.

4.32 You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to inform them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed to facilitate your attendance, if this is considered reasonable.

4.33 You must notify and obtain the consent of all those present at the meeting if you intend to record it.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The decision of any investigation by the Senior Management Team will be final, unless of a very serious nature where outside agencies need to be involved, i.e. police, health and safety, environmental health etc or if the matter has been referred to the Trustees.

6. RECORDS

6.1 A log will be kept of all complaints received in writing and action taken and by whom for inspection by any interested third party who is been authorised and to ensure that the policy is effective.

6.2 All records will be inspected on a regular basis, and at least annually to ensure the effectiveness of this policy. We will use complaints to identify areas for improvement.

7. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

7.1 We are members of the Housing Ombudsman Service and follow their guidance and advice. If you are unhappy with how we are dealing with or have dealt with your complaint. You can contact them here:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ
Telephone: 0300 111 3000
Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Website: https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk