

YOUR GUIDE TO HOW COMPLAINTS ARE DEALT WITH IN ST. MICHAEL'S HOUSE.

St. Michael's House is committed to dealing effectively with any complaints you may have about our service.

If we got something wrong, we will apologise and where possible we will try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

WHEN TO USE THIS POLICY

When you complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things as soon as possible and in the easiest and most direct way. If you have a complaint, raise it with the person you are dealing with. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. However, they may need time (maximum 5 days) to look into it.

If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your complaint, the member of staff will draw them to our attention. If the member of staff can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for your complaint to be formally investigated.

HOW TO COMPLAIN FORMALLY

You can make a complaint in any of the ways below:

- You can ask for a copy of our complaint form from the person with whom you are already in contact (or see attached).

- You can get in touch with a Complaints Officer on tel.01 8840371 if you want to make your complaint over the phone.
- You can use the form on our website at www.smh.ie
- You can e mail us at info@smh.ie.
- You can write a letter to us at the following address: Complaints Officer, St. Michael's House, Ballymun Rd, Dublin 9.

We also aim to have complaint forms available at all of our reception areas.

WHAT SHOULD YOU INCLUDE IN YOUR COMPLAINT

- Remember to state your name, address and telephone number (and email, if applicable) and whether you are acting on behalf of someone else
- Briefly describe what your complaint is about stating relevant dates and times, if applicable
- List your specific concerns starting with the most important concern
- Be clear about what you are hoping to achieve (for example an apology, explanation, etc.)
- State your preferred method of communication

It will assist the Complaints Officer if extra information and/or copies of relevant documents are attached to your complaint.

DEALING WITH YOUR COMPLAINT

We will formally acknowledge your complaint within in 5 working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it.

We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements for example, if you have language difficulties.

We will deal with your complaint in an open and honest way.

We will make sure that your interactions with

us in the future do not suffer just because you have made a complaint.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

INVESTIGATION

We will tell you who we have asked to investigate your complaint. If your complaint is straightforward, we will usually ask somebody from the services to look into it and get back to you.

In some cases, if the complaint is particularly complex, we may ask someone from outside the organisation to investigate.

We will set out to you our understanding of your complaint and ask you to confirm that we have got it right. We will also ask you to tell us what outcome you are hoping for.

The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your complaint. If you don't want this to happen, it is important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are happy to accept this.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 30 working days.

If your complaint is more complex we will:

- Let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate
- Tell you how long we expect it to take.
- give you regular updates at least every 20 working days on any progress made

The person who is investigating your concerns will aim first to establish the facts. The extent of this investigation will depend on how complex and how serious the issues

you have raised are. In complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan.

In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your complaint. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.

When investigating your complaint, we will look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your complaint.

If necessary, we will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and any guidance.

If there are issues we cannot deal with as part of the complaints process we will tell you where they can be dealt with.

OUTCOME

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication.

This could be by letter or email, for example. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we will tell you what and why it happened. If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

If we didn't do something well, we will aim to put it right.

INTERNAL CEO REVIEW

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the process you can refer the matter to the Office of the CEO of St. Michael's House.

HSE

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may forward your complaint to the HSE:

Head of Consumer Affairs
HSE, Oak House
Millennium Park
Naas
Co.Kildare

OMBUDSMAN

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Ombudsman (*or Ombudsman for Children, if appropriate*). The Ombudsman is independent and can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

- have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on our part
- have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure.

The Ombudsman expects you to bring your complaint to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. You can contact the Ombudsman by:

- telephone: 01 6395600
Lo-Call: 1890223030
- email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie
- the website: www.ombudsman.ie
- writing to: The Office of the Ombudsman
18 Lower Leeson Street
Dublin 2
Or
Ombudsman for Children's
Office
Millennium House
52-56 Great Strand Street
Dublin 1.
Ph: 01 8656800

LEARNING LESSONS

We take your complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made. Our executive management team considers a summary of all complaints on a regular basis as well as details of any serious complaints.

Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it by. We will let you know when changes we have promised have been made.

WHAT IF YOU NEED HELP

Our staff will aim to help you make your complaint known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help.

You may wish to contact National Advocacy Service (NAS) Ph: 075 103000 (10-4pm Mon-Fri) who may be able to assist you.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected.

However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us.

We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

Making a Complaint Form

This section should be completed by the person making the complaint (Service User, Family, a member of the public or staff on their behalf)

Your Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone Numbers: _____
Email: _____

Please indicate the service about which you wish to complain:

Nature of Complaint:

Please describe the problem in as much detail as you can, giving relevant dates and names etc. You can use another page for additional information.

I certify that the above information is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Forward To: _____
(Person in Charge / Complaints Officer)