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1. Purpose

Blackpool Carers Centre (BCC) is committed to providing high quality services to all users, but recognises that there may be occasions when a user feels that the quality or level of service received has been less than they could reasonably expect. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that users of BCC Services are able to register a formal complaint and that there is an effective procedure for the investigation and resolution of complaints. BCC recognises that it can learn from comments and complaints about its services and this policy is also designed to ensure that, where appropriate, the findings from investigations are used to generate service improvements.

2. Definitions

- BCC means ‘Blackpool Carers Centre’

3. Policy Statement

This policy and procedure applies to all staff, volunteers, Trustees, carers and the general public.

- A complaint can be made to BCC about any matter reasonably connected with the exercise of its functions, including safeguarding concerns and the way in which these are dealt with.
- BCC will have a nominated member of the Board of Trustees who will take responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Complaints Procedure and that, where appropriate, action is taken in light of the outcome of any investigation.
- During review of the complaint consideration will be given to any safeguarding issues.
- BCC will take action to ensure that users are aware of the procedure to complain if they are dissatisfied with the services it provides.
- BCC will ensure that the outcomes of investigations are recorded, reported to the Board of Trustees and, where appropriate, are used to inform the planning process for service improvements and developments.
- A carer or any person who is affected by or is likely to be affected by, the action, omission or decision of the BCC can make a complaint.
- A representative may make a complaint on behalf of someone where the person:
 - Is a carer
 - Is unable for any reason to make the complaint themselves; or

- Has requested the representative to act of their behalf.

In the case of a person affected who is incapable of making a complaint themselves, the representative must be a relative or other person who, in the opinion of a Director, has a sufficient interest in their welfare and is a suitable person to act as representative.

In the case of a child, the representative must be a parent, guardian or other adult person who has care of the child. Where the child is in the care of a local authority or a voluntary organisation, the representative must be a person authorised by the local authority or the voluntary organisation.

- A complaint must be made within three months of the date on which the matter occurred, or within three months of the date on which the matter of the complaint came to the notice of the complainant.
- In exceptional circumstances, where a complaint is made outside of the permitted timescale, a Director may investigate if:
 - Having regard to all circumstances, the complainant had good reasons for not making the complaint within the permitted period: and
 - Notwithstanding the time that has elapsed, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and efficiently.

4. Procedure

- Many complaints can be resolved quickly and effectively. In the first instance, any complaints should be raised with the member of staff involved. It is hoped that most minor complaints can be resolved in this way.
- If the complaint is unresolved, or is of a more serious nature, including safeguarding, it should be directed to a Director. If the complaint is against a Director it should be directed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- Ideally the complaint should be in writing but verbal complaints will also be accepted by a Director who will formally record the details.
- On receipt of a written or verbal complaint a Director will send a written acknowledgement to the complainant within three working days of receipt of the complaint advising them that an investigation is being carried out.
- A Director will carry out an investigation, or will nominate another appropriate person to carry out an investigation and will aim to provide the nominated Trustee with a written report of the issue and outcome within

seven working days of receipt of the complaint. This timescale may be extended by agreement with the nominated Trustee if the complaint requires a more detailed investigation. If this occurs the complainant will be informed of the delay and the reasons in writing.

- When the investigation has been completed and action agreed the complainant will be informed of the outcome in writing within seven working days.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation the matter will be put in writing and referred to a panel made up of two Trustees who have not previously been involved. The decision of this panel will be final. (See note below for the Young Carers Service)

Note: Users of the Young Carers Service or their relatives or advocates have access to Blackpool Councils Children and Young People's Department complaints procedure if they do not think it is appropriate or desirable to use the Blackpool Carers Centre Complaints Procedure or where the use of the Procedure has not proved satisfactory to the complainant.

- During the course of an investigation into any complaint, all matters relating to it will be treated in a confidential manner and will be discussed only with those immediately concerned.
- The Board of Trustees will receive a six monthly summary of complaints received and will monitor the outcomes and actions taken.

All information, reports, statements must be kept for a minimum of twelve months.