

Foundation for Social Welfare Services

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Office of the Chief Executive Officer

POLICY 18

Service Users Satisfaction Policy

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Service Users Satisfaction Policy

Preamble

The Foundation for Social Welfare Services (“The Foundation”) is committed to provide the best possible service to service users. However there may be times when service users are not satisfied with the quality of the service that they receive. In such circumstances The Foundation is committed to investigate such complaints from service users. This policy should be a way of ensuring that the number of dissatisfied service users decreases or ideally becomes non-existent and to improve upon the service provision when deemed necessary.

In view of this, The Foundation is committed to ensure that the Satisfaction Policy is user friendly, accessible, fair and known to all staff members and Service users alike.

Procedure

a. Complaints Received at Agency Level

When a complaint is received by a staff member administering a helpline or by staff within customer care of the respective agency, the persons receiving the complaint shall immediately pass on the complaint and refer all contact details to the respective Leader.

When a complaint is received by any staff member, s/he shall inform the leader and the complaint can and should be dealt with on the spot, by a member of the service delivery team itself in consultation with the Leader. The manager is to be informed of all complaints being handled at unit level. The Manager should inform the Operations Director/Senior Manager unless the complaint concerns a minor issue and is resolved on the spot.

If the service user is not satisfied with the reply given or with the way that a complaint is handled, the Leader shall inform his/her Manager and Operations Directors/Senior Manager. Service users should be made aware that s/he can refer their complaint to the Head of Customer Care Services within the Secretariat of the FSWS Head Office.

There may be circumstances when the Operations Director may deem it to be more appropriate for the Customer Care Services within the Secretariat of the FSWS Head Office to deal with the complaint received at Agency Level, in order to avoid any possible biases and/or conflict of interest. In such situations the Operations Director shall inform the Service User that the complaint will be dealt by the

Customer Care Services. The Operations Director will inform the Head of the Customer Care Service of the complaint and the reasons why such complaint is being referred.

If the complaint is about **ethical issues** or **professional misconduct** the Leader shall inform his/her superiors and service users should be made aware that their complaint will be referred to the Operations Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation, who shall deal with the case.

Any complaint dealt with by the Agency's Director or Manager shall be logged in a standardized document as attached in appendix I. Any minor complaints dealt with on the spot by the respective service will not be logged in this system. The Director shall forward an updated Complaints Logging Report (Appendix 1) to the Quality Assurance Department by the stipulated time frames (3 times a year).

If a complaint reaches any other FSWS Department directly the complainant will be directed to the Head of Customer Care Services within the CEO's office.

b. Complaints received by the Customer Care staff within the CEO's Office

Complaints may be received verbally or in writing by the Customer Care Staff within the CEO's office. Upon receipt of such complaint, s/he shall inform the Operations Director of the respective agency and request feedback on the complaint received. Any action to be taken shall be discussed and agreed upon with the Operations Director in consultation with the CEO. The customer care staff shall inform the service user of the outcome and log the complaint in the Complaint Logging System (Complaints Received Form) and forward it to the Quality Assurance Department by the stipulated time frames.

If the complaint is about ethical issues or professional misconduct, the complaint shall be referred to the Operations Director and/or CEO.

In situations where complaints are received on cases, where there are legal procedures going on, the Foundation should not enter into the merits of the complaint but should refer the service user to take recourse in Court. The only exceptions to this, is where the complaint concerns allegations of Professional Misconduct, in which case the procedure below shall be followed.

c. Complaints about ethical issues or professional misconduct

1. All complaints about ethical issues or professional misconduct should be addressed in writing to the CEO or Operations Director. This will enable the Foundation to have all the necessary information regarding complaints handling procedures, thus monitoring improvement standards;

2. The complaint's report shall be compiled by the service user himself/herself who may be assisted by the staff taking the complaint or the Secretariat Staff within the CEO's office;
3. The complaint's report shall be compiled on a standardized template (Appendix 1) and should include the details of the persons making the complaint, a description of the nature of the complaint giving details of the facts as accounted for by the person making the complaint, the date in which the complaint was received and what remedy the person would like and action to be taken on the complaint. If the service user is assisted, once such report is written, the report is read to the complainant. The complaint's report should always be signed by the complainant;
4. Complaints made through telephone calls will not be dealt with unless full details are received in writing after the telephone call has been made. Complainants should be made aware during their phone call that their complaint will not be processed further if this is not followed in writing. Complaints made in person should also be made in writing. All complaints should be duly signed by the complainant;
5. Once the written complaint report is received, the Customer Care Staff within the CEO's Office shall send a letter of acknowledgement, if possible within one working day of receipt of complaint but not later than three working days in case there is a justified reason to do so;
6. The Foundation should provide remedy if and when the complaint can be attended to at this stage;
7. The CEO or Operations Director shall inform the Manager about the complaint received on the same day that the complaint is received and discuss the way forward. The person against whom the complaint is lodged, should be informed about the complaint as early on as possible in the process, unless this is deemed to be detrimental to the process of dealing with the complaint. The Operations Director shall consult with the Service Manager as to when the worker should be informed and by whom;
8. The CEO shall appoint the appropriate professional/s or any other staff member from within or outside FSWS to investigate the complaint;
9. The appointed professionals/staff members shall set appointments to interview/consult the necessary staff and service users involved in the complaint;
10. A full report on the findings (Appendix 2) including any recommendations for remedial action if required, shall be drawn up and presented to the CEO,

within three weeks in most cases but not later than six weeks in any case. The Report shall include a short description of the complaint, the parties that were consulted, the parties that were interviewed, the outcome of the interviews and other comments or action to be taken. This report shall be filed in a confidential file having the history of how the complaint originated and progressed. This file shall not be accessible to other personnel and will be retained in the office of the CEO, and a copy in the office of the Operations Director;

11. The CEO and/or Operations Director shall inform the Complainant of the outcome of the Complaint Investigation, by not later than 2 weeks from submission of the Report. The complainant will be informed of how the investigation is proceeding, when a reply cannot be given within the stipulated time frame;
12. The customer care staff within the secretariat of the FSWS Head Office shall log the complaint in the complaint logging system (Complaints Received Form) and forward it to the Quality Assurance Department by the stipulated time frames.

d. Complaints meriting further Disciplinary Action

When at the onset a complaint concerns behavior that may warrant disciplinary action in line with FSWS Disciplinary Policy (Policy number 3), this shall be immediately referred to the Human Resources Department for further action from their end. In addition, if following action at Agency level or by the customer care staff of the CEO office or by the CEO/Operations Director it results that further disciplinary action may be required the person dealing with the complaint shall immediately report to the Human Resources Department and submit a report of the complaint and the findings, for follow up action by the Human Resources Department.

e. Complaints Logging System

The Foundation shall collect and issue three complaints reports and an annual report on all complaints logged with FSWS. Operations Directors/Senior Managers and Customer Staff Care within the CEO's Office, shall forward the requested reports, on the stipulated template and time frames, to the Quality Assurance Department. This Department shall in turn compile an FSWS complaint logging report, as well as annual report and submit it to the CEO.

f. Appeals

Both services users and staff members have a right to appeal should they feel that the complaint was not handled appropriately.

1. Should a staff member or service user be dissatisfied with the response s/he should also be given the right to express his/her complaint to the Chief Executive Officer of The Foundation. In such situations s/he should express his/her dissatisfaction in writing to the CEO within a week of receiving the reply of the inquiry;
2. Upon receiving the letter of appeal the CEO can look into the matter himself/herself and send a written reply to the person appealing within a week of receipt of the appeal. Should s/he deem necessary s/he can appoint an independent person/s to evaluate the outcome of investigation and request a written report with this evaluation. A written reply from the CEO will be received by the person appealing by not later than four weeks of receipt of the appeal. Should this not be possible, the CEO is to inform the person appealing of the evaluation process.
3. In situations where the complaint was handled directly by the CEO and staff/service users lodges an appeal, the CEO is to appoint an independent person to review the appeal.

g. Other ways how Services Users can complain

The Foundation is committed to exceed the expectations of the service user. If the service user is dissatisfied with the service, the service user should be encouraged to let the appropriate staff know and it is the commitment of The Foundation to make it right.

If for some reason the service user is still dissatisfied, then s/he should be informed about the other sources where s/he can lodge the complaint. These sources are listed hereunder:

- (i) The respective professional bodies, especially in the field of social work and psychology, mainly in the case of professional misconduct or unethical behaviour.
- (ii) The President of The Foundation for Social Welfare Services
c/o FSWS,
212, Cannon Road,
Sta. Venera
- (iii) The Ombudsman
St. Paul's Street
Valletta

Foundation for Social Welfare Services

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Complaint Report

Section 1: DETAILS

Name of Complainant :

Address:

Tel Number:

Mobile Number:

Date received:

:

Section 2: SHORT DESCRIPTION OF COMPLAINT

Complaint relating to: _____ (Name of Service)

_____ (Name of Worker/s)

Description of the Complaint:

Section 3 : Remedy being sought by the Complainant:

Name of Complainant

Signature of Complainant

Name of Staff Member writing the Report

Signature of Staff Member writing the Report

Date

For official use only

Does complaint involve ethical issues or professional misconduct: Yes/No:

If yes: the complaint is brought to the attention of the CEO and Operations Director.

Date of submission of complaint:

If no: Record Action Taken.

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REPORT

Section 1: DETAILS

Complaint of:

Date received:

Date investigation started:

Date investigation finalised:

Section 2: SHORT DESCRIPTION OF COMPLAINT

Section 3: PARTIES THAT WERE CONSULTED / INTERVIEWED

Section 5: OUTCOME OF INTERVIEW

Section 6: COMMENTS

Name

Designation

Date

Report sent to: CEO/Operations Director and Group Senior HR Manager (if applicable)

