

## Complaints Policy & Procedure

### Policy

Path is committed to providing fair, effective and stakeholder-focused services. We aim to treat all stakeholders with respect, working to find effective solutions for those using our services. We are therefore always pleased to receive and consider comments on our services, which we see as part of our continuous improvement. Path is particularly committed to enabling, responding to and learning from complaints.

Below is a summary of how Path processes complaints, which may be made by clients, landlords, partner agencies or others.

### Process (by stage)

#### 1. Informal concerns / complaints

In the first instance the member of staff who is dealing with the stakeholder should seek to address any issues, themselves, also giving the stakeholder the option of formally complaining. The Path worker may therefore be able to deal with the matter successfully, to the satisfaction of the stakeholder in an informal manner.

If that is unsuccessful, the client or stakeholder should be invited to make a formal complaint.

#### 2. Formal complaints

Where the stakeholder wishes to make a formal complaint, then the worker needs to acknowledge that and formally note with their manager that a complaint is being made. The worker will invite the complainant to make a written statement (offering Path's form but people may write a letter or email instead). This should be addressed to the relevant manager.

Path needs to know and record:

- the name of the complainant
- the nature of the complaint
- against whom it is made
- the date
- if relevant, what the complaint was hoping for instead
- any other information the complainant wishes to supply

The person making the complaint is welcome to do so and can ask for and will receive support in doing so.

If the stakeholder does not want to give the complaint to the worker they are engaging with then they should be informed that they could send the complaint personally to the relevant manager or have someone else collect it from them. Equally, they may ask for the support of another worker to use this process. Path will therefore support the writing and submitting of a complaint to the service manager.

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The manager (or, in their absence, the Director) will then acknowledge, address and initially respond to the complaint within 7 working days.

### 3. Appeals

If the stakeholder is not satisfied with the response from the manager, then the complaint can be sent to the Director. A written response will be sent within 7 working days, again unless more time is needed to investigate, in which case an acknowledgement will be sent along with a timescale for dealing with the matter.

If the complaint concerns a manager, then the complaint can be directed straight to the Director; if it concerns the Director then the complaint can be directed straight to the Chair of the board, who will delegate a fellow trustee to respond.

### 4. Board of trustees

With a service complaint, after initially being responded to by the worker, and then the manager, the decision of the Director would usually be final; but, if a complainant remains unsatisfied with the above process, the Director has the option of taking the complaint to the board, for advice or for trustee involvement.

In the event of any further appeal, the chair will investigate and their decision will be final.