**COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR USERS OF CITY & HACKNEY CARERS CENTRE**

**INTRODUCTION**

City & Hackney Carers Centre aims to offer support, information and training to carers of all ages, of the full range of caring responsibilities and from the full range of City & Hackney’s ethnic and cultural communities.

We aim to provide our service in a way that is responsive, courteous, respectful and helpful to all carers who contact us. We have a commitment to consulting with carers to ensure that as a Carers Centre, we are providing the kind of support that carers want.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, we will take this seriously. We will provide you with information on how to make a complaint; we will deal with this complaint promptly and according to our stated procedure. We will notify you of the outcome of your complaint and any action we have taken to put things right.

The **Complaints Procedure**, detailed in Section 1, describes how you can make a complaint and the process which will be followed by City & Hackney Carers Centre to investigate and take action about complaints received.

We are always very pleased to hear carers’ views or suggestions on any of our services, and we encourage you to talk to any of the workers or to write to us with your ideas. The **Suggestions Procedure**, detailed in Section 2, describes how to let us know what we can do differently or better or what to do if you have a new idea that we might not have thought about.

**SECTION 1:**

**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Stage 1: Making an Informal Complaint**

If you are unhappy with the service you receive from City & Hackney Carers Centre you can speak directly to the person(s) concerned. You may wish to do this

on your own, or accompanied by a friend.

If you do not wish to speak to the person(s) concerned, you can write a letter. If your complaint is about the Chief Operations Officer (COO) please see Section 1A.

We will listen and hopefully explain or resolve the problem to your satisfaction at this stage, or at the very latest within 10 working days from your initial contact with us.

**Stage 2: Making a Formal Complaint**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One or feel you like to make a formal complaint, this can be done in one of the following ways:

complete a Complaints Form (available upon request from the Carers Centre)

and send it to us, **OR**

phone us and ask for the person who replies to complete a Complaints Form over the phone. A copy of the form will be posted to you on the same day.

Whichever method you choose, please give us as much detail as possible. If we need further information we will contact you. The form will be given to the COO of the Carers Centre (or, in his/her absence, to the Chair of the Board of Trustees) upon its receipt in the office.

You will be sent an acknowledgement within 10 working days.

**Investigating the Complaint**

The Carers Centre’s COO or a Senior Manager will deal with your complaint in the strictest confidence. S/he will contact you to discuss your complaint and may need to meet with you in person. The COO or Senior Manager will gather information from you and will then investigate your complaint with the person(s) concerned.

In the course of the investigations it may be necessary for the COO or Senior Manager to arrange to see you. This meeting will be arranged in a place you are happy with. If you wish, a friend or relative can be present.

It is not permitted for a staff member from CHCC to support you in the meeting.

The COO or Senior Manager will write to you with the outcome of his/her investigations within **15 working days** of you first contacting him/her. If longer is required, you will be notified in writing.

If any follow up action is required, the COO or Senior Manager will discuss with you what this will be.

**Stage 3: If you are unhappy with the results**

If you are not satisfied with the COO or Senior Manager’s reply to your complaint, you have **28 days** in which to request a formal review.

To do this, you should write to the **Chair of the Board of Trustees** at the Carers Centre, marking your envelope ‘**Private and Confidential**’.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees will investigate your complaint. This may ultimately involve convening a Review Panel made up of three people – members of the Board of Trustees and independent persons. If you wish, you will be able to make a written submission to the Panel and/or attend the panel hearing to speak to members of the Panel. A friend or relative can also be present and will be able to speak on your behalf. You will have **5 working days** notice of the time and date of the meeting.

The role of the Review Panel will be to:

look at the facts

make a recommendation (or decision) on whether they agree or disagree with the decision made at Stage 2

decide on any consequent action and how this will be carried out inform you in writing of the above.

This will be completed within **28 days of your request for a review**. The decision of the review panel will be final.

**Stage 4: Follow Up**

Follow up action will be monitored by the COO, Senior Manager and/or Chair, depending on where your final complaint rests, and you will be notified of any ongoing circumstances relevant to your case.

All complaints received by the COO, Senior Manager and/or Chair, and the outcome of them, will be notified by the COO, Senior Manager or Chair to the next Board of Trustees meeting after the complaint has been settled.

A record of complaints, actions taken and outcomes will be kept at the Carers Centre and will be available to funders for inspection.

**SECTION 1A:**

**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – IF YOUR COMPLAINT IS ABOUT THE COO**

The procedure for a complaint against the COO of the Carers Centre is similar to that for any other member of staff. The COO is not above the agreed procedures or policies of the Centre, and as such has the same responsibilities in relation to users of the Carers Centre as all other members of staff of the Centre.

If you are unhappy about the service you receive from the COO, please follow the same procedure as for all other staff (See Section 1: Complaints Procedure). Hopefully, the COO will be able to explain or resolve the problem to your satisfaction.

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of your discussion with the COO, then please complete a Complaints Form and send it to the Chair of the Board of Trustees at the Carers Centre in an envelope marked ‘Private and Confidential’.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees will investigate the complaint, following the same procedures as set out in Stage 2 of Section 1.

Should you then wish to take your complaint to a Review Panel, you will need to inform the Chair of the Board of Trustees in writing, and she/he will follow the procedure set out in Stage 3 of Section 1.

**SECTION 2:**

**SUGGESTIONS PROCEDURE**

**To Make a Suggestion**

We are always glad to hear of suggestions for improving or expanding our services. To make a suggestion, please either:

* phone us and tell us what your suggestion is
* complete a Complaints/Suggestions form (available from the Carers Centre)
* send us a letter
* tell us about it next time you are in the Centre
* write your feedback and suggestion(s) in the feedback book in the reception area at the Centre.

Don’t forget to leave us your name and address so that we can let you know what we intend to do about your suggestion within **28 days** of receiving it.

**Complaints Form**

Thank you for taking the time to inform us of your complaint. We will be in touch with you to discuss your complaint further.

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| **Name :** |  |
| **Address :** |  |
| **Contact telephone no:**  |  | **Date completed:** |  |
| **Please describe the reason you are making this complaint, and provide us with the details of your complaint:**Please hand your completed form to us or post to: City & Hackney Carers Centre, c/o Knox Cropper LLP, 65 Leadenhall Road, London EC3A 2AD. In line with CHCC’s complaints policy, your complaint will be passed to a manager for further investigation. We will acknowledge it within 48 hours and complete our investigation within 28 days.  |
| **CHCC Staff use only:** |
| **Date complaint form received:**  |  | **Name of staff member receiving complaint form:**  |  | **Date complaint received by manager:**  |  | **Name of manager receiving complaint form:** |  |