

Policy Statement

The Complaints Policy and Procedure defines the terms and sets out the procedures in the event it becomes necessary for an external individual or organisation to make a complaint about the service that St John's Foundation provides, or if the behaviour of its staff and volunteers does not meet the expected standard.

A record is kept of all complaints, concerns and issues, whatever their severity, along with details of the subsequent investigations and any action taken. The records are reviewed monthly by the relevant senior manager, in order to establish whether there are any trends or patterns that St John's should be aware of, and for which an improvement is required. Complaint statistics are reported to the Audit and Risk Committee on a quarterly basis and a summary of complaints by theme presented annually. Any complaints of high consequence are reported to the Board immediately.

Listening is the only true way to guarantee that St John's provides support that meets the needs and exceeds the expectations of individuals and the community. St John's seeks information that continuously improves the quality of experience for those with whom we engage and support. Every complaint, concern or issue is an opportunity for us to improve the quality of services we provide and the experience of people interacting with St John's.

If anyone has a concern, an issue, or wishes to make a minor complaint, we encourage informal discussion as soon as possible with any member of staff, as providing information or correcting misunderstandings or misconceptions at an early stage may enable the matter to be successfully resolved. In all cases, everything will be done to try and resolve the issue informally and it is hoped that the majority of concerns will be resolved in this way.

Regulated activity – CQC

Complaints, concerns and issues also matter to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as they inform them about the quality of care and support provided by St John's. They indicate how responsive St John's is, and how safe, effective, caring and well-led the services are. Within our regulated services, CQC can use their powers as a regulator to directly address the poor handling of complaints. Regulation 16 of the HSCA 2008 Regulations 2014 states:

- Any complaint received must be investigated and necessary and proportionate action must be taken in response to any failure identified by the complaint or investigation.
- The registered person must establish and operate effectively an accessible system for identifying, receiving, recording, handling and responding to complaints by service users and other persons in relation to the carrying on of the regulated activity.
- The registered person must provide to the Commission, when requested to do so and by no later than 28 days beginning on the day after receipt of the request, a summary of:

- Complaints made under such complaints system
- Responses made by the registered person to such complaints and any further correspondence with the complainants in relation to such complaints
- Any other relevant information in relation to such complaints as the Commission may request

This policy has been written in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: Regulation 16.

Non-regulated activity

St John's also provides a number of services which are not regulated but which strive to meet best practice. It is important that stakeholders feel complaints are fully investigated, appropriately actioned and that the complainant is kept informed.

Complaints for non-regulated activity will therefore follow the same complaints process as regulated activity, as laid out in the Complaints Procedure.

Purpose

This policy seeks to enable individuals, organisations or others acting on their behalf to tell us how they feel about the services or support provided by St John's.

St John's takes pride in the high quality of the services and support provided and aim to maintain the standards consistently.

St John's accepts that individuals and organisations have the right to express their views if they feel unhappy with any aspect of the service they receive, or the behaviour of staff and volunteers working and volunteering for the Foundation.

People may have complaints, concerns or issues about:

- The services St John's offers
- The support someone receives
- A resident experiencing difficulties with another resident
- Services people have not been given

St John's believes anyone wishing to make a complaint, or raise a concern, should find it easy to do so and it is important to welcome the feedback, to investigate, acknowledge when things go wrong and to learn from mistakes so they are not repeated. All complaints are taken seriously, investigated thoroughly, objectively and impartially, with the results communicated to the complainant; no-one making a complaint, or raising a concern will be discriminated against.

St John's believes failure to listen to or acknowledge a complaint can lead to increased problems and may create a breakdown in relationships. The purpose of this policy is to have an effective system in place for identifying, receiving, handling and responding appropriately to concerns and complaints.

Scope

The Complaints Policy and Procedure applies to all trustees, employees, volunteers, tutors, beneficiaries¹, visitors, tenants and other organisations/ partners, without exception. All St John's employees have a responsibility to ensure they work within the remit of this policy and in the manner in which they have been trained.

Volunteers at St John's are not expected to deal with any form of complaint; informal or formal. If they are spoken to about a concern or complaint, they should acknowledge it, take it seriously and refer the complainant to a member of staff.

The policy does not cover: -

- Comments or discontent with our policies or policy decisions
- Matters that have already been through the complete process
- Whistleblowing (please see our Whistleblowing Policy)

This policy operates alongside our responsibilities as outlined in the Duty of Candour policy and procedure.

Policy review and changes

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Exec.

This policy does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment. A regular review, at least annually, will ensure that the Complaints Policy remains current and appropriate. Employees will be notified of any amendments (through internal communications addressed to all staff), following which they will be bound by the policy as amended.

Definitions

A complaint, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as an '*expression of dissatisfaction about anything or anyone at St John's*', whether it is found to be justified, or not.

The policy covers complaints about: -

- The standards of service St John's provides
- The behaviour of anyone working and/or volunteering at St John's

¹ Beneficiary is the term used for anyone benefiting from a St John's charitable activity or service

Complaints received about our partners' services, their employees or their volunteers will be directed to the relevant partner who should instigate their own complaints policy and procedures. Depending on the nature of the complaint against the partner, St John's may also decide to investigate.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated confidentially unless we are legally bound to report them, i.e. in the event of a criminal act or safeguarding issue of vulnerable adults. While St John's Foundation will treat any information given sensitively, it cannot always guarantee to keep a complainant's identity confidential, for example their identity may be recognised by others during an investigation. The St John's will endeavour to limit the risk of identification where this is possible. Details of complaints, however, will be recorded for review and inspection purposes.

Please read this Complaints Policy in conjunction with the Complaints Procedure.