



Introduction

Homemaker strives to treat all people with respect, and to provide an effective, professional service. There may be times when clients (or other interested persons) feel, for whatever reason, that the service they have received has fallen short of what they would expect, and this procedure outlines the steps which should be taken to respond to any complaints, all of which will be treated very seriously.

Complaints from a friend or advocate will be accepted, provided that they have the explicit permission of the client.

Complaints by members of staff will be dealt with separately under the Grievance Procedure.

Identifying Complaints

All clients will be given a copy of the leaflet, 'How to make a Complaint', at the first meeting with their caseworker, and they will be encouraged to say whenever they are not happy with any work that is being undertaken on their behalf.

All complaints should be made to the Director of Development except in a situation described in the next paragraph. A complaint may be made verbally or in writing. If the complaint can be satisfactorily resolved at that time, then it will be concluded immediately, with a note of the agreed action being sent in writing to the client. However, if the concerns cannot be resolved easily on first contact, then an investigation will be initiated.

Where the complaint is about the Director of Development or the Director, the first point of contact should be the Chair of the Board.

Complaints about all aspects of the service should follow this procedure as far as possible.

Process for dealing with Complaints

- All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days of receipt.
- Notification of the complaint will be made to the referrer or their manager, where the client gives permission for this.
- Initially all complaints will be thoroughly investigated speedily by either Director, and a written response given within three weeks. Complaints may not necessarily be resolved within this timescale, but an update must be given, with an indication of when the matter might be resolved.
- During this period, a meeting may take place with the complainant, or further written information may be sought.
- Once the investigation has been concluded the a letter will be sent to the complainant explaining:-
 - whether we agree that Homemaker has failed to provide an adequate service
 - if so, what remedial action we propose to take

Appeal process

- Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response received, they may write to the Chair of the Board. This must be done within 4 weeks.
- The Chair must normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days of receipt.
- The Chair will consult with another Board member, and together they will investigate the complaint and give a written response within three weeks. Complaints may not necessarily be resolved within this timescale, but an update must be given.
- The Board members may meet with the complainant, the member of staff involved, and/or the person who undertook the initial investigation, where they feel any clarification is necessary. The investigation must be totally independent and must respect confidentiality.
- Once the investigation of the appeal has been concluded a letter will be sent to the complainant explaining: -
 - whether we agree that Homemaker has failed to provide an adequate service
 - if so, what remedial action we propose to take

Unresolved complaints

Any complaints which remain unresolved following investigation by both the Directors and the Board may be referred to the funding organisation.

Financial Ombudsman Service

The Financial Ombudsman Service provides a free, independent service for clients to solve disputes with not-for-profit debt advice providers.

The Financial Ombudsman Service will only step in once Homemaker has had the opportunity to investigate matters, so complaints should be made to Homemaker first. If the complaint is about debt advice and the complainant is not satisfied with Homemaker's final response; or if eight weeks have passed since the complaint was made to Homemaker, the Financial Ombudsman can be asked to review the complaint.

Contact the Financial Ombudsman Service

By post:

The Financial Ombudsman Service
Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange
London E14 9SR

By phone:

Monday to Friday – 8am to 8pm

Saturday – 9am to 1pm

- 0800 023 4567 calls to this number are now free on mobile phones and landlines
- 0300 123 9123 calls to this number cost no more than calls to 01 and 02 numbers

By email: complaint.info@financial-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk

Confidentiality

Although confidentiality must be respected as far as possible, the complainant should be informed that it will be necessary to speak to the member of staff involved in order to investigate the matter thoroughly, and to the referring agency.

Response

The final written response should include a summary of the complaint as perceived by the investigator, details of how the complaint was investigated, and what action has been taken or will be taken.

Recording

All complaints, whether received verbally or in writing, will be recorded in a document kept specifically for the purpose. No documents relating to the complaint should be placed in the client/casework file.

Monitoring

Complaints are a standing item on each board meeting agenda.

Document control

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