



COMPLAINTS POLICY

01. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Epilepsy Ireland welcomes feedback from service users relating to our service. It is our policy to address service user needs, ensure service users satisfaction, uphold the rights and protect the dignity of the staff team, prevent further escalation of any concerns a service user may have and provide organisational information relating to quality improvement and organisational learning.
- 1.2 The organisation is committed to ensuring the complaint is dealt with in a fair and impartial manner and safeguards the rights of the complainant and the staff team. Complainants will not experience any victimisation or suffer any retribution for making a complaint.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the policy is to enable people who use our service to express any problems or concerns that they may have, and to have them resolved quickly and satisfactorily. Epilepsy Ireland wishes to ensure that each individual is treated equally and fairly and that consistency can be exercised in the event of a complaint about our service.
- 2.2 We wish to have an opportunity to put things right if a person is displeased with any of our services. This policy guides the person complaining (the complainant) and the organisation as to how we will address complaints that we receive.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 The 'designated officer' is the person in the organisation who is in charge of handling the written complaints and ensuring that they are addressed.
- 3.2 The 'complainant' is the person who is making the complaint.
- 3.3 A situation is deemed as a complaint when a person has made clear that they are (verbally or in writing) making a complaint. Comments on social media, information comments to staff, or minor issues that are dealt with on the spot, are not considered to be a complaint.

4. Legislation

- 4.1 A designated officer is assigned to manage complaints of the organisation, in accordance with Part 9 of the Health Act 2004, The Health Act (Complaints) regulations (2006) and the procedure manual for the management of consumer feedback to include comments, compliments and complaints. (The designated officer in Epilepsy Ireland is required to manage the administrative aspect of complaint and pass them on to the relevant manager to investigate)

5. Scope

- 5.1 The complaints policy applies to any person who has used, or is currently using, Epilepsy Ireland's services. This can include a member or non-member of Epilepsy Ireland engaged with our services, a professional utilising our services, or any member of the public who has engaged with the organisation and is dissatisfied with our service.
- 5.2 In the case of complaints relating to abuse of a vulnerable adult or of a child, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy and/or Child Protection policy must be followed.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1 The CEO has responsibility to ensure the organisation is committed to supporting all service users in their concerns and complaints and to ensure the complaint is addressed and resolved.
- 6.2 The Director of Services has responsibility of ensuring workers are trained in the policy and procedures and are clear of their responsibilities.
- 6.3 The organisation has an appointed designated officer for complaints, who is responsible for co-ordinating the procedure for complaints in the organisation, involving the relevant workers in the procedure of managing the complaint, and recording relevant statistical data for organisational use and reporting responsibilities.
- 6.4 All workers are responsible for managing any complaints made to them by following the procedures in this policy and directing complainants to follow the relevant procedures. All workers have the responsibility of ensuring that the complaints policy is available to their service users and that the single page complaints poster is displayed in their local office.

7. Further Resources

- 7.1 The HSE service user complaints procedure is available at www.hse.ie and is called 'Your Service, Your Say'.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

8. Reporting Procedures

- 8.1 If a service user wishes to make a complaint, they can follow the procedures set out here. Epilepsy Ireland will endeavour to resolve all complaints as close to the point of contact as possible.
- 8.2 All staff in Epilepsy Ireland may be approached and have the appropriate skills and knowledge to manage minor complaints.
- 8.3 Vexatious or malicious complaints will not be accepted.
- 8.4 **Stage One – Informal level - Local Resolution of your Complaint**

A verbal complaint may be made to any staff member and may be resolved at an informal level where the complainant is satisfied that their complaint has been resolved.

8.5 Stage Two – Written Complaint (Pre-Investigation)

A written complaint may be submitted to the complaints officer in Epilepsy Ireland who will seek to resolve the complaint in conjunction with other staff and managers relevant to the complaint. Your complaint should be acknowledged within one week of submission and resolved within 30 days.

8.6 Stage Three – Written Complaint (Investigation)

Where a written complaint is not resolved at the pre-investigation stage (stage two) an investigation will be undertaken by a member of the management team as designated by the CEO and a written report submitted to resolve the complaint. If extensive investigation is required, the complainant should receive a progress report every 20 days.

8.7 External Investigation

If the complainant is unhappy with the final outcome of the organisations investigation of the complaint, they may approach the Ombudsman/Ombudsman for children or seek further advice relating to the complaint.

9. Complaints Procedure - accessibility for service users

9.1 A single page complaints procedure for service users is attached in Appendix One and should be displayed in all Epilepsy Ireland offices and on our website.

10. Recording and Documenting Complaints

10.1 Complaints will be recorded appropriately by the worker dealing with the complaint, and the designated officer will receive a written record relating to the complainants concerns and the resolution of the complaint. This detail will be kept in a central location and managed by the designated officer. The designated officer will pass the complaint on to the relevant manager for dealing with.

10.2 Epilepsy Ireland's Designated Officer will record all complaints and report the data to the CEO for learning and statistical purposes. The HSE complaints procedures will be followed by the organisation and reporting complaints using agreed procedures will occur as required by the HSE.

10.3 Where risk or organisational quality is a concern, the designated officer should inform the CEO or DOS, so that further procedures may be undertaken if required, regardless of whether the complaint is related to their area of work. Learning from complaints includes examining the underlying situation which caused the complaint to arise and embedding any necessary changes in the organisation as a result.

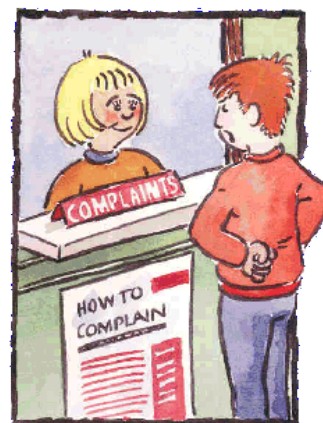
11. Confidentiality

11.1 All personal information is held under strict confidentiality within the organisation and complaints will be discussed on a need to know basis with relevant parties only. Trends and data will not use the identity of individual service users.

- 11.2 The organisation Confidentiality Policy will be followed relating to service user complaints.
- 11.3 All written contact and documentation relating to a service user complaint can be accessed by the complainant through the Freedom of Information Act.

12. Appendices

Appendix One: Complaints Procedure Poster for Service Users



Are you happy with our service?

Epilepsy Ireland welcomes feedback from service users relating to our service and we are committed to ensuring that any complaints are dealt with in a fair consistent way.

If you are displeased about the service/services that we are providing to you, we would like the chance to put things right. If you feel that we have been unwilling to help you or slow in helping you with your query, or in any other way have not provided the best service to you, please let us know so that we can improve our service.

Anonymous complaints cannot be formally investigated but will be noted for the manager's information. We have a full complaints policy which you can ask us for, or you can read from our website at www.epilepsy.ie

Need help making a complaint?

You can ask someone – friend or relative – to help with your complaint.

How do I make a complaint?

Most problems can be sorted out locally, informally and verbally. First, tell us what the problem is and give us a chance to put things right for you.

Making a Formal Complaint

If that does not work, you can make a formal complaint by writing to our complaints officer at Epilepsy Ireland, 249, Crumlin Road, Dublin 12 or by emailing info@epilepsy.ie letting us know that you wish to make a formal complaint and that it has not been resolved yet through talking to our staff.

How long will it take?

We try to resolve all complaints within 30 days but if it is very complicated, we endeavour to conclude all investigations within 6 months of the receipt of the complaint.

What if I am still not happy?

If you are still not happy after your complaint has been formally dealt with by the staff in Epilepsy, you may ask for an investigation by writing to the CEO, Mr. Peter Murphy, who will designate a senior staff member to investigate your complaint further.