Bridge Substance Misuse Programme
63c Gold Street
Northampton
NN1 1RA

Bridge - Policy Nº 3

Complaints

Drafted by:	Judi Armstrong	**Version:**	006
Updated by:	Bridget Carroll		
Date ratified by the board:	30/10/24		
Date last reviewed:	29/10/24	**Scheduled review date:**	30/10/26
Responsible person:	Vince Carroll		

1. Introduction and Purpose

For this Policy, the definition of the word 'staff' relates to both paid and unpaid (voluntary) roles.

For this Policy, the definition of the word 'member' relates to individuals who seek to gain Recovery capital: the internal and external resources necessary to achieve and maintain recovery from substance misuse as well as make behavioural changes, from their contact with Bridge.

Bridge Substance Misuse Programme (BSMP) is committed to delivering a high standard of service, dealing with everyone in a way that is fair, transparent, and free from discrimination. We recognise that there may be occasions when we do not deliver the level of service that we would like, and we welcome the opportunity to consider and respond to any concerns that may arise. This Complaints Policy explains how we expect our staff to deal with any complaints.

Any negative comments posted about BSMP on any social media platform will not be treated as a complaint. Those with genuine concerns are encouraged to report their complaint via the procedure below so that it may be properly investigated.

What is a complaint?

A complaint for the purpose of this Policy is 'any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about the way in which we have carried out, or failed to carry out, our work which requires a response.'

2. Policy

Aim:

The aim of this Policy is to provide a structured way for people to complain about the level of service we have delivered.

Objectives:

The objectives of this Policy are:

- To provide a robust, impartial, outcome focused procedure whereby we may respond quickly to complaints to achieve a satisfactory outcome
- To monitor complaints so that we may improve the way we work

All Bridge Substance Misuses Programme staff work to a clear set of policies and procedures.

We listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service. Complaints may be raised about any aspect of the service delivered e.g., mistakes, delay, discrimination, and anyone affected by our work has the right to make a complaint. Complainants will be treated with courtesy and respect at all times and we ask that you treat those staff dealing with your complaint in the same manner. All complaints will be handled in confidence.

3. Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for handling complaints promptly and sensitively and ensuring the complaint is passed to the relevant person.

The Bridge Service Director assumes responsibility for keeping this Policy up to date and dealing with initial complaints.

The Bridge Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for training volunteers on our Complaints Policy and dealing with initial concerns from volunteers.

The Bridge HR Advisor is responsible for cascading information and monitoring staff induction procedures.

4. Procedures

During induction all staff, including board members, will confirm that they have read and understood the Complaints Policy.

You may make your complaint either informally or formally.

Informal Complaint

If you wish to make an informal complaint, you may do so verbally, by email or letter. It is useful if you can indicate what action you feel might resolve the issues being raised.

You should talk to any member of staff who will refer you to speak to the Service Director or Volunteer Coordinator in the first instance.

Alternatively, you can write to us at the address above or e-mail: migration@bridge-northants.org.uk.

The Service Director or Volunteer Coordinator will try to resolve your concerns with a mutually agreed solution. However, if you are not satisfied with the response, you may wish to make a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint

If you wish to proceed formally, you should set out your complaint in writing as clearly as possible, including witness statements and any other supporting information, together with the outcome sought and send it to the BSMP Board of Directors at the address above.

Upon receipt of your formal complaint a letter of acknowledgment will be sent to you within 10 working days.

Your complaint will be investigated thoroughly within 28 days of receipt by the Board of Directors.

The complainant may be invited to attend a meeting with the Board of Directors; this may include any witnesses.

The Board of Directors on hearing the facts will determine the next steps.

You will receive a formal written reply within 10 days of the meeting. Should the need for disciplinary action of a staff member be identified, the disciplinary policy will be set in motion. You will be informed of the outcome resulting from your complaint, including suggestions for resolving the matter where appropriate. You will not be informed of details of any disciplinary action (for reasons of confidentiality).

Where a complaint involves a Bridge Director, they will not be involved in the investigation of the complaint.

If you are still dissatisfied

If having followed the two internal stages of our service complaints procedure you remain dissatisfied, then you can appeal.

How to appeal:

BSMP is commissioned by North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) in Corby and Wellingborough, and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) in Northampton. Any appeal should be sent to the appropriate Comments, Compliments and Complaints Team, the contact details for which are below:

North Northamptonshire Council:

Email: myfeedback@northnorthants.gov.uk

Address: The Comments, Compliments & Complaints Team
North Northamptonshire Council
Sheerness House
41 Meadow Road
Kettering
NN16 8TL

West Northamptonshire Council:

Email: myfeedback@westnorthants.gov.uk
Address: The Compliments, Complaints and Compliments Team
West Northamptonshire Council
One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

You have a maximum of 28 days from the date of the final response to register your appeal.

Remedies:

Complaints may be rejected, partially or fully upheld and the complainant will be informed of the outcome, with reasons, of all decisions made under this Policy. When we get things wrong, we will act to:

- Accept responsibility and apologise.
- Explain what went wrong and why.
- Suggest appropriate action to rectify the situation.
- Make any changes required to prevent reoccurrences.

The action we take to put matters right in response to a service complaint can include any combination of the remedies set out in the list below. The general principle we follow is that complainants should, so far as possible, be put in the position they would have been in, had things not gone wrong.

The remedy applied needs to be proportionate and appropriate to the failure in service and consider what redress people seek when they complain. An apology is generally the most appropriate outcome, but other action may also be necessary in some circumstances.

List of remedies

- A full apology, explaining what happened and/or what went wrong (an apology is not an acceptance of liability under Section 2 of the Compensation Act 2006).
- Remedial action, which may include reviewing or changing a decision on the service given to an individual complainant.
- Putting things right, for example a change of procedure to prevent future difficulties of a similar kind, either for the complainant or others.
- Training or supervising staff or a combination of both.

Unreasonable or vexatious complaints

Should a complainant persist in pursuing a complaint where there is clearly no reasonable basis for doing so, the Service Director may determine that no further action can usefully be taken in response and will inform the complainant of this, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.

5. Related Documents

Confidentiality & Data Protection Policy BP 001.

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998/GDPR, subject to the need to disclose information as required by statutory authorities, and/or as a result of statutory or legal obligations.

Equality and Diversity Policy BP 002.

BSMP values equality, diversity, and inclusion as key features within all its activities and aims to treat everyone with dignity and respect. Complaints will be dealt with taking account of the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Compensation Act 2006
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/29/contents

6. Authorisation

This policy has been through all necessary procedures and is now in force.

Authorised by:	Vince Carroll
Signed:	
Authorised on:	30/10/24