

Complaints Policy



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Document Control

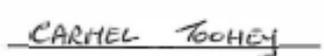
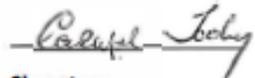
This policy document is considered a living document that will require amendment and updating. It may also need to be read in conjunction with other reference documents and legislation. It is therefore recommended that the person charged with updating the document should liaise with the relevant personnel within the Organisation.

Amendment Procedure

To ensure that each copy of the Complaints Policy contains updated information, the Manager will record the changes or amendments on the amendment list on the Master File which is kept in the Manager's office. The amendment list, along with any revised or new pages, will then be circulated as necessary.

Adoption of Silver Arch Family Resource Centre Complaints Policy

The following individuals, being for the time being personnel with management responsibility within Silver Arch Family Resource Service, hereby approve the adoption of this Complaints Policy document as being applicable to all activity within the Organisation.

 Chairperson, on behalf of the Board of Directors	 Signature	 Date
 Manager	 Signature	 Date

VERSION CONTROL

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Ratified by the Board	Date
1.0	Document Creation	Yes	6/9/21

SECTION 1. General Principles

Policy Statement

Silver Arch Family Resource Centre (Silver Arch FRC) is committed to providing a high-quality service and we welcome comments, suggestions and complaints about our performance and conduct in carrying out our duties and responsibilities. We welcome all feedback and we view complaints as opportunities to review practices, procedures and identify areas for improvement.

In dealing with complaints, we are committed to ensuring that:

- Our complaints process operates in the spirit of natural justice and is fair, transparent and impartial
- The emphasis will be on a positive resolution of complaints at a local level where possible
- We try to resolve complaints in an effective and timely manner, and use an early resolution approach to complaints wherever possible
- When addressing a complaint, we will keep parties informed of how we are doing with the complaint within the timeframes stated in this document
- We will acknowledge any mistakes, provide an explanation, and put matters right whenever possible
- We will learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

Our Mission and Vision

OUR MISSION

is to provide services that are responsive to the needs of individuals, families and communities.

OUR VISION

is a nurturing and inclusive community in which to live and grow.

Our Values

Our Values



RESPECT

We respect people, value diversity and are committed to equality.



TRUST

We build supportive relationships with people, so that they can believe in our support, our honesty and integrity.



EMPOWERMENT

We work with people so that they can find the best way to meet their needs, and to reach their potential.



QUALITY

We aim to provide an excellent service, that is responsive to individual needs and personal situations.

All Silver Arch FRC staff are required to conduct the business of the service in accordance with set policies and procedures. Staff must act at all times in accordance with Silver Arch FRC Code of Conduct.

SECTION 2. Scope

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about an organisation's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by, or on behalf of, the organisation.

Who can complain?

Anyone directly affected by the way in which Silver Arch FRC has carried out its functions, or anyone acting directly on such a person's behalf, may make a complaint under this policy.

This policy specifically deals with service user's complaints. Other organisational policies (such as grievance procedures etc.) can be used if employees wish to complain.

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated, as there is always the possibility that they are vexatious or malicious and the anonymity of the complainant would not enable the principle of natural justice and procedural fairness to be upheld. In certain circumstances Silver Arch FRC may initiate an investigation where there is a serious risk identified or where there is sufficient information provided to enable a thorough investigation to be conducted.

What can you complain about?

You can complain about the way we do our business, something we have done or should have done or how we have treated you.

We are unable to accept complaints relating to matters listed below. These are all dealt with under separate policies and procedures:

- Data subject requests made under the EU General Data Protection Regulation, 2016/679 (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 or the Freedom of Information Act 2014;
- Any matter relating to Child Safeguarding, or the protection of vulnerable adults, as these will be dealt with under our Child Safeguarding policy;
- Any matter actively under investigation by the Office of the Ombudsman;
- Any matter which is the subject of proposed or ongoing independent inquiry or legal proceedings; or
- A complaint or feedback which is considered to be vexatious or frivolous.

SECTION 3. Making a Complaint

How to make a complaint

A complaint should be made as soon as possible after the action giving rise to it.

Step 1: Informal Complaint

If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things as soon as possible and in the easiest and most direct way. If you have a complaint, raise it with the person you are dealing with. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then, and also record the complaint and the outcome. If you are unsatisfied with the response, the employee can escalate the complaint to his/her Line Manager. The Line Manager will follow up and respond to you within 5 working days, and again a record will be maintained.

If you remain dissatisfied with the response then you will be supported to make a formal complaint and submit it to the **Complaints Officer**.

Step 2: Formal Complaint

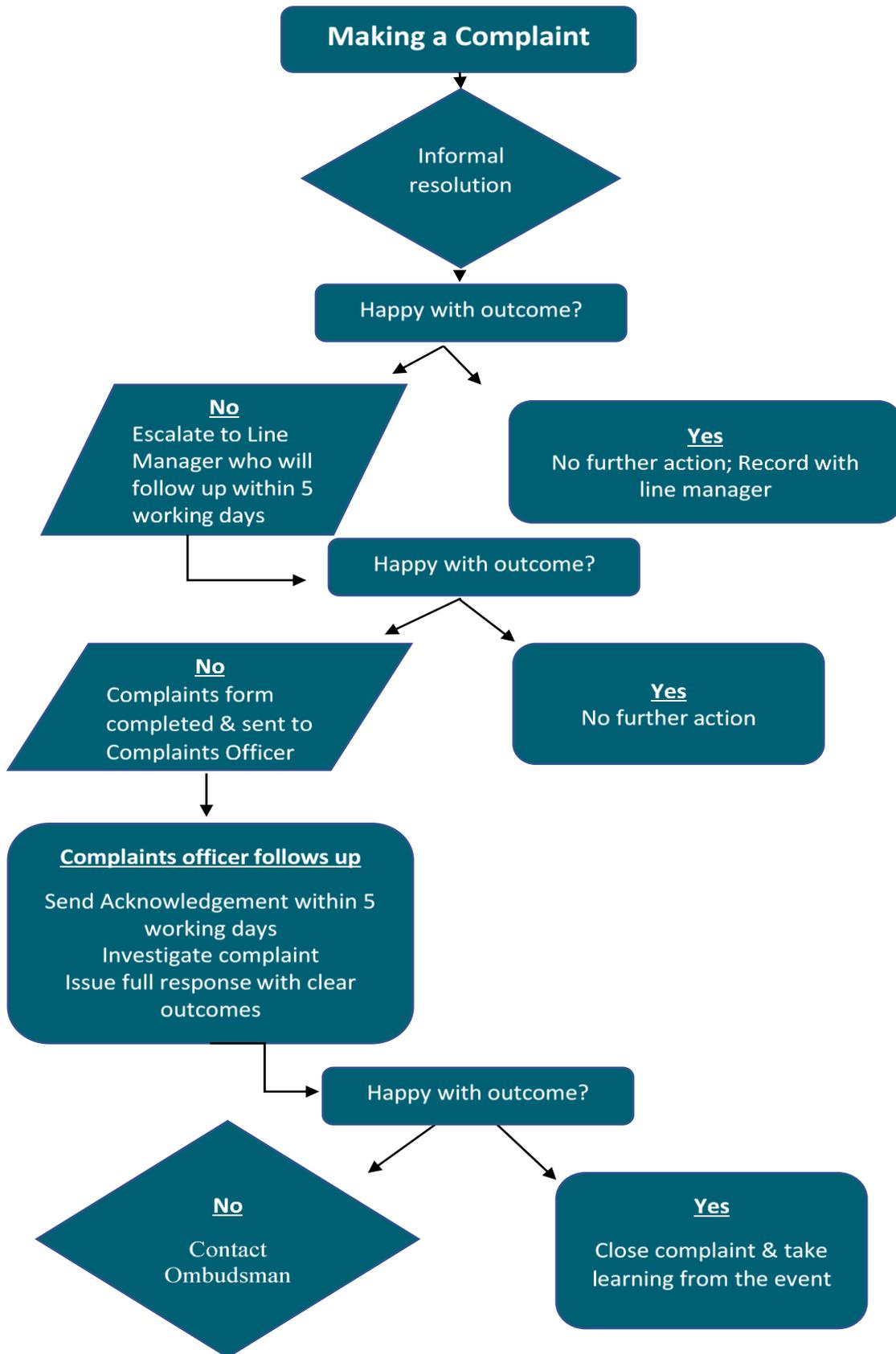
To make a formal complaint we ask that you complete our **Complaints Form**, a copy of which can be obtained from a member of staff or from Reception (067-31800). We also have complaint forms available at our Reception and on our website www.silverarchfrc.ie.

You can submit this completed form for the attention of the **Complaints Officer**, marked '**Strictly private and confidential**'.

What should you include in your complaint

- Remember to state your name, address and telephone number (and email, if applicable) and whether you are acting on behalf of someone else
- Briefly describe what your complaint is about stating relevant dates and times, if applicable
- List your specific concerns starting with the most important concern
- Be clear about what you are hoping to achieve (for example an apology, explanation, etc.)
- State your preferred method of communication.

It will assist the Complaints Officer if extra information and/or copies of relevant documents are attached to your complaint.



SECTION 4. Dealing with your complaint

The Complaints Officer will formally acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days and let you know how he/she intends to deal with it. He/She will also:

- ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements
- deal with your complaint in an open and honest way
- make sure that your interactions with us in the future do not suffer, just because you have made a complaint.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

Investigating your complaint

The Complaints Officer will gather information and look into your complaint. In some cases, we may ask someone from outside the Organisation to investigate the complaint. If this occurs we will tell you who this person is.

The Complaints Officer will set out his/her understanding of your complaint and ask you to confirm that we have got it right. He/She will also ask you to tell us what outcome you are hoping for.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are happy to accept this.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 30 working days.

If your complaint is more complex we will:

- let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate
- tell you how long we expect it to take
- give you regular updates every 20 working days on any progress made.

In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your complaint. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.

When investigating your complaint, we will look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your complaint.

If necessary, we will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and any guidance.

Outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we will tell you what and why it happened. If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

Putting things right

If we didn't do something well, we will aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part, we will try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had got it right.

Ombudsman

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is independent and can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

- have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on our part
- have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure.

The Ombudsman expects you to bring your complaint to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. If you remain unsatisfied you can contact the Ombudsman by:

Telephone: 01 6395600 Lo-Call: 1890223030

Website: www.ombudsman.ie

Writing to: The Office of the Ombudsman, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2

Learning Lessons

We take complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made. Our Manager considers a summary of all complaints on a regular basis as well as details of any serious complaints. Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it by. We will let you know when changes we have promised have been made.

What if you need help

Our staff will aim to help you make your complaint known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will put you in touch with someone who can help.

What we expect from you

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights.

We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

SECTION 5. Recording and reporting of complaints

It is important to identify areas of learning from complaints so that we can improve performance and reduce the likelihood of any recurrence of the issues giving rise to the complaint. As a result, we keep a confidential record of all complaints received and we share the learning anonymously within the Organisation.

The Manger will review this record and will make reports to the Board of Directors on a regular basis in relation to the management of complaints received.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

All personal information received by the Organisation in relation to a complaint shall be stored in accordance with our GDPR policy, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

SECTION 6. Staff Training

Silver Arch FRC will empower staff and train them to deal with complaints as they arise with the aim of resolving issues as early as possible.

SECTION 7. Policy Review

This policy will be formally reviewed in 3 years or before if required.

APPENDIX – Complaints Form

COMPLAINTS FORM

The person who experienced the problem should fill in this form. If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please ensure that you complete **Section B**.

SECTION A: CONTACT DETAILS OF COMPLAINANT	
Name:	
Address:	
Mobile Phone No:	
Email Address:	
Please state by which method you would like us to contact you:	Post <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION B: MAKING A COMPLAINT ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE	
Please note: we will need to confirm that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.	
Name of person you are making a complaint for:	
Address of person you are making a complaint for:	
What is your relationship with complainant?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	

SECTION C: YOUR COMPLAINT

What do you think we did wrong, or failed to do?

Describe how you personally (or the person you are representing) have been affected

What do you think should be done to put things right?

Have you already discussed your concern with a member of staff? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so and why you are not happy with their response.

If you have any documents to support your concern/complaint, please attach them with this form.

In line with our obligations under data protection law, we can confirm that the personal information captured on this form is used solely for us to process your complaint.

By ticking this box you confirm that you are aware of our Privacy Policy and consent to your personal data being processed in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

Name (printed):		Signature:		Date:	
Date received by Complaints Officer:					
Follow up Action:					

When you have completed this document please send it to **Complaints Officer**, Silver Arch FRC,
52 Silver Street, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary E45 P624, marked **Private and Confidential**.