



Bristol After Stroke Complaints Policy and Procedure

POLICY

- 1.0 BAS is committed to providing high quality support and services. In order to do this BAS actively seeks feedback from clients, partner organisations and workers.
- 2.0 As part of this commitment it is the responsibility of all employees and the Board of Trustees to raise awareness of the existence of the Complaints Policy and Procedure. This ensures that when individuals are dissatisfied with the work of BAS they are aware of their right to complain.
- 3.0 BAS accepts any complaint made about its services, workers or activities and views it as an opportunity to learn and develop. When a complaint has been made the complainant can expect it to be fully investigated and to be informed of the outcome.
- 4.0 BAS places great emphasis on achieving local resolution of complaints quickly and courteously.
- 5.0 BAS recognises that making a formal or informal complaint is a difficult undertaking for many people and as a result information should be provided to complainants about potential support available to them to assist them through the process.
- 6.0 BAS understands that any failure to act quickly when a complaint has been received may cause unnecessary anxiety or aggravation of the problem.
- 7.0 A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction about BAS, its activities, employees, volunteers or Board of Trustees which requires a response.
- 8.0 BAS acknowledges that the nature of any serious complaint may result in criminal proceedings for example in the case of Health and Safety.
- 9.0 If a complaint is relatively minor in nature the aim should be to resolve the issue informally to the satisfaction of the complainant by either the appropriate Manager of the employee / volunteer being complained about, or, if the complaint is about the Manager, a Complaint Officer appointed by the Board of Trustees from their own number (who will not be the supervisor of the Manager in question).
- 10.0 All personal information or case records relating to complaints will be treated in confidence and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Information will only be disclosed to those people with a need to know to enable them to investigate the complaint.
- 11.0 A copy of the Complaints Policy will be prominently displayed, made available on the website and when applicable leaflets will refer to the policy. It should also be brought to the attention of all clients.
- 12.0 All employees / volunteers will be made aware of this policy and their responsibility, if any, to inform clients.



- 13.0 All contact with a complainant will be courteous, respectful and polite.
- 14.0 Complainants should be assured that making a complaint will not compromise the provision of any current or future services or support.
- 15.0 The Manager or appointed Complaints Officer will establish if the complainant has any specific needs for which they require additional support during the complaints process, and seek to ensure support to meet these needs is provided. As mentioned above this may include accessing other support services, or translation and interpretation services.
- 16.0 Complainants should be informed of their right to inform the Charity Commission of their complaint.
- 17.0 The Manager will notify the Board of Trustees of any and all complaints.
- 18.0 In the case of serious complaints the Board of Trustees may need to seek legal advice.

Complaints Procedure

In all cases:

- 19.0 All clients should be made aware of the existence of the Complaints Policy.
- 20.0 Complaints can be made by letter, phone, email or personal contact.
- 21.0 This procedure can be used by any person or organisation wishing to make a complaint about the work of the organisation or individual employee / volunteer.
- 22.0 BAS recognises that there are three stages in the Complaints Procedure.
 - 22.1 Stage 1 - Problem solving
 - 22.2 Stage 2 - Formal
 - 22.3 Stage 3 - Review
- 23.0 All complaints should be taken seriously and the person receiving the complaint should record the information on a complaint form and pass the form to the Manager or a member of the Board of Trustees if the complaint is about the Manager.
- 24.0 It may be possible to resolve some complaints in an informal and sensitive manner by the Manager or appointed Complaints Officer.
- 25.0 At this stage the complainant may be satisfied that their views have been listened to and have no wish to take the matter further.
- 26.0 The complaint should be recorded and passed to BAS's Manager or appointed Complaints Officer.

Stage 1 – Problem Solving

- 27.0 If it has not been possible to resolve the issue the Manager or appointed Complaints Officer will take further action.
 - 27.1 They will investigate the complaint. In most cases they will invite the complainant to a meeting to discuss the issue and identify others they need to interview, and they will write a report of their process and findings.
 - 27.2 Following the investigation they will write to the complainant or meet with them if writing is not appropriate, to report their findings and whether they uphold the complaint in full, in part, or not at all.
 - 27.3 If the complainant is satisfied at this stage no further action may be necessary.

Stage 2 - Formal

- 28.0 If the issue has not been resolved the Stage 2 Formal Process can be initiated.
- 28.1 At Stage 2 a Complaint Officer will be appointed by the Board of Trustees from their own number.
- 28.2 This process will also be followed if the complainant wishes to go straight to the formal stage.
- 28.3 Following the investigation the appointed Complaint Officer will report to the Chair of Trustees. Full records of all findings will be kept.
- 28.4 Under normal circumstances the Chair will respond within 21 days giving a full explanation of the decision whether to uphold their complaint in full, in part or not at all, and informing the complainant of their right to have the complaint looked at by a panel within a further 21 days of the receipt of this decision if they remain dissatisfied.
- 28.5 If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome no further action will be necessary.

Stage Three - Review by Panel

- 29.1 If the Complainant is not satisfied the Chair will arrange for a panel to meet within 21 days to review the complaint. The panel will consist of three named members of the Board of Trustees, or appropriately experienced external people if insufficient Trustees are available, who have not been involved in earlier stages and one will be appointed as Chair.
- 29.2 The panel must review the processes followed, reports and findings of earlier stages, interviewing relevant people, including the complainant, if appropriate, and reach a decision on its own findings in relation to the complaint within 10 working days.
- 29.3 The Chair of the panel must communicate their findings and decision to the complainant within a further 3 days, at least by letter although a meeting should be considered if appropriate.
- 29.4 It is hoped that the complaint will be resolved by the end of Stage 3. However if the complainant is not satisfied they should be informed of their right to contact the Charity Commission.

Approved by the Board of Trustees: November 2015