



Kingdom Abuse Survivors Project
Supporting Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse in
Fife

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A Purpose of the Procedure

Service users need to have the right to complain about the service they receive by means of free and clear access to a complaint procedure. This procedure is to enable people using services of, or taking part in activities organised by, KASP to be heard when they feel things have gone wrong.

Many people may approach KASP at times when they feel vulnerable or anxious. If services are not satisfactory, this may be particularly distressing. It is very important for KASP to be aware of areas of dissatisfaction and to correct any shortcomings.

This procedure aims to ensure that complaints/problems are resolved quickly, fairly and as close to the point of service delivery as possible to ensure that the individuals involved and the organisation as a whole benefit from the experience.

B Who Can Complain?

1. Any individual who is receiving a service from KASP
2. Any individual who has been refused a service from KASP.
3. Any individual acting on their behalf.

C The Principles

1. People making complaints have the right to be treated equally and not suffer discrimination.
2. Complaints are to be treated seriously and dealt with in good time.
3. There should be ease of access to enable service users or their representatives to make their views known.
4. There should be clearly indicated means of challenging decisions on service provision/non provision or other matters of concern to service users.
5. No person should be involved in investigating a complaint relating to his/her own actions or judgement.
6. Complaints are to be treated with an open mind, and will be investigated without prejudice. Those making a complaint must be reassured that complaining will not result in any discrimination against them.
7. People making complaints have the right to confidentiality. If requested, names will not be disclosed in investigating complaints.
8. However, anonymous complaints may not be investigated.
9. The overall level of complaints is to be recorded and monitored.

D The Procedure

The procedure identifies two types of complaints:

- Informal Complaints – those that appear to be able to be resolved quickly and easily e.g. complaint about people talking too loudly in corridor.
- Formal Complaints – those that appear to be more serious and which should follow a set procedure e.g. complaint that discrimination has occurred or that the confidentiality policy has been breached.

KASP also has mechanisms to hear *suggestions* that individuals may have to improve services. Each counselling room has a suggestion logbook where service users can note their suggestion and refer back to in order to find out what action has been taken as a result of their suggestion. Before making a complaint, service users should think about whether their issue could be resolved by using the suggestion logbook and if it is felt that this may be the case then this avenue should be tried first.

Informal Complaints

If you have an informal complaint any member of staff will be happy to discuss it with you and take any action required. If you feel that an informal complaint has not been remedied to your satisfaction you can decide to make a formal complaint.

Formal Complaints

1. If you have a complaint about any service, individual or activity which you wish to be handled formally, you should speak to the Project Manager. Failing that you can write to The Chairperson, KASP, 29 Townsend Place, Kirkcaldy, KY1 1HB

It should be noted that confidentiality must always be respected when making a complaint.

2. Where formal complaints are raised with the Project Manager or Chairperson, the Project Manager or Chairperson will investigate how you would like the complaint to be dealt with. There are two options as to how complaints can be dealt with and these are:
 - You can use the complaint form to detail your complaint.
 - In cases of complaints against an individual, mediation meetings can be arranged.

Mediation meetings would incorporate the individual making the complaint and a support person of their choice; the individual who has been complained about and a support person of their choice; the Project Manager or Chairperson. The aim of a mediation meeting would not be to attribute blame but rather to examine ways of resolving the situation, which are acceptable to everyone.

Where mediation meetings fail to achieve an acceptable result, you can submit a formal written complaint following the steps below.

3. In the case of formal written complaints to the Chairperson or those forwarded on a complaint form, the following procedure shall apply:

- The Chairperson will decide, from the nature of the complaint, who is the appropriate person/people to deal with the complaint.
- The person making the complaint will receive an acknowledgement of their complaint from the appropriate person within 5 working days and the complaint will be investigated within 10 working days. If for any reason it seems unlikely that the original 10 day time period for response is not going to be met, the person making the complaint will be advised of this fact and a new time-scale for completion will be agreed with them.
- The investigating officer will make a judgement as to whether each complaint is upheld, not upheld or not substantiated and note any action which should be taken as a result of the complaint. This information will be passed to the Chairperson who will respond on behalf of KASP, this will be done in writing.
- The complainer should be given the right to state whether they are satisfied with the response and if not whether they wish the complaint to be considered by the management committee.
- Complainers, who are not satisfied with the reply, should write to the Management Committee, within 7 working days outlining why they are not satisfied.
- The Management Committee will discuss the complaint at the next committee meeting and make a judgement as to whether each complaint is upheld, not upheld or not substantiated and note any action which should be taken as a result of the complaint. The complainer will be informed in writing of the outcome and will be given the opportunity to state whether they are satisfied with the response. The decision of the Management Committee is final though this does not affect individuals' rights to invoke the complaints procedure of Fife Council Social Work Department.
- Formal complaints about individual members of the Management Committee should be addressed to the Chairperson of the Management Committee. Formal complaints about the Chair of the Management Committee should be addressed to the Vice-Chair. These will be dealt with by either the full Management Committee or by a Sub-Group appointed by the Management Committee, which would not include the person who is being complained about.

At any point individuals can access Fife Council Social Work Department's Complaints Procedure by writing to or telephoning Douglas Murray, 16 East Fergus Place, Kirkcaldy KY1 1XT. Phone number is 08451 55 55 55 Ext 470496.

4. Any complaint, which alleges malpractice by a counsellor, can be dealt with under KASP's complaints procedure.