



Deaf Village Ireland
External Feedback & Complaints Policy
(Version 1- May 2021)

Approved at the Board of Management meeting on 4th May 2021.

The Deaf Village Ireland Feedback & Complaints Policy outlines how Deaf Village Ireland acts upon any feedback and complaints received to seek resolution. This Policy will explain how you can submit feedback, or make a complaint and advise you on your rights as a service user. This policy follows the Principles of Natural Justice.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Feedback & Complaints Policy is to enable Deaf Village Ireland service users and tenant groups to express concerns or issues they may have with any aspect of the service delivered to them by DVI staff. For the purposes of this policy, any member of the Deaf community, or general public, who uses the DVI facilities or engages in DVI run activities is considered to be a service user. The procedure outlined enables the issues raised to be dealt with fairly, without delay and in a confidential manner. Deaf Village Ireland welcomes all feedback from its service users and tenant members and will use the information received to develop and improve the supports provided.

2. Principles of Natural Justice:

As per the Principles of Natural Justice, employees are entitled to the following:

- To be presented with the entirety of the case - good, bad or indifferent - being made against them, in writing where possible, and in a timely fashion;
- To be afforded adequate time to consider those allegations;
- To be given an opportunity to reply to same; and
- To have such representations heard in an impartial manner by the management. This could mean that the manager may not be the appropriate person if the allegation concerns matters between the parties personally involving this manager. For example, where the allegation is that the particular employee abused their manager personally, then the manager is not the person who should investigate the subsequent disciplinary enquiry. This flows from the simple maxim that says, "*Nobody should be a judge in their own case.*"

2.1: Who Can Issue Feedback or Make a Complaint?

This procedure relates only to services provided by Deaf Village Ireland and is not inclusive of services provided by other organisations within the campus. Any person who has sought provision of any Deaf Village Ireland service may issue feedback or complain, in accordance with the procedures established under this policy, about any action of DVI staff that -

- a) It is claimed did/does not accord with fair and sound administrative practice; and
- b) Adversely affects or affected that person

2.2: As defined in the Health Act 2004, an action does not accord with fair and sound administrative practice if it is:

- Taken without proper authority;
- Taken on irrelevant grounds;
- The result of negligence or carelessness;
- Based on erroneous or incomplete information;
- Improperly discriminatory;
- Based on undesirable administrative practice; or
- In any other respect contrary to fair or sound administration.

3. How to submit feedback:

Any service user may give feedback (informal complaint). Should this individual be unsatisfied with the resolution of this informal complaint, they can then make a formal complaint.

3.1: There are a number of ways in which feedback or a formal complaint may be submitted:

- Verbally (including Facetime or Skype through ISL), in writing, or via email;
- By skype on Sylvia.nolan3;
- By text on 087-3730788 / 087-9905223 and arrange a facetime call;
- By email info@deafvillageireland.ie; and
- You can write to: Deaf Village Ireland, Ratoath Road, Cabra, Dublin 7.

3.2: The complaints process order begins with an informal complaint, which can be followed (in cases of unsatisfactory resolution) by a formal complaint.

3.3: Definition of a Complaint:

Definition of a complaint (as per the Health Act 2004, part 9)- “complaint” means a complaint made under this Part about any action of the Executive or a service provider that—(a) it is claimed, does not accord with fair or sound administrative practice, and adversely affects the person by whom or on whose behalf the complaint is made.

3.4: Vexatious or malicious complaints:

If found to be frivolous or vexatious, a complaint will not be pursued any further. If a complaint is found to be vexatious or malicious, there will be no record of the complaint in the file of the staff member/service about which the complaint was made.

4. What to include in a complaint:

A written complaint should include:

- Who was involved?
- What happened and when?
- What are you concerned about?
- Have you done anything else to resolve this matter?
- What do you want to happen now?
- It will also assist the Complaints Officer if any extra information and/or copies of other relevant documents are attached to your written complaint.

4.1: Whistleblower protocol:

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014, provides legislation for Whistleblowers and protects those who report possible wrongdoing in the workplace. This Act provides redress for employees who are dismissed for having made such a report. Volunteers are not specifically covered by the legislation and its

protections; however, reports of wrongdoings from volunteers will be investigated as a protected disclosure. Deaf Village Ireland takes all malpractice seriously, whether it is committed by Board Members, staff, management or volunteers.

For details on how to report suspected illegal or improper activities and practices, please see the Deaf Village Ireland Employee and Volunteer Protection Policy.

5. Acknowledgement of a complaint:

(Health Act 2004) Upon a complaint being received by, or assigned to, the Complaints Officer (including a referral under section 48(2)), they shall notify, within five working days, the complainant, in writing, that the complaint has been so received or assigned and outline the steps that they propose to take in investigating the complaint, and the time limits in completion of the investigation.

6. Advocacy:

Any person who wants to make a formal complaint can appoint an advocate to support them in making their complaint and support them in managing that complaint. A staff member or a trusted person may act as an advocate for an external person wishing to make a complaint. Anyone who is an advocate must, however, uphold the principles of advocacy listed below.

- Empowerment of the person where possible;
- Respect for the person and their wishes;
- Maintain confidentiality; and
- Act with diligence and competence.

7. Actions taken after a complaint is received:

Deaf Village Ireland will take all feedback and every complaint seriously and will seek a resolution, in accordance with the Principles of Natural Justice. Deaf Village Ireland's process for managing complaints is as follows:

Stage 1 – Informal/verbal complaints resolution at point of contact (Informal);

Stage 2 - Formal investigation of written and serious complaints (Formal); and

Stage 3 - Internal Review (Board of DVI).

7.1 Stage One - Informal complaints resolution:

If an issue arises, Deaf Village Ireland encourages members and service users to attempt to resolve the issue informally through feedback with the appropriate person and at all times using ISL fluently so that there are no communication barriers at any given time.

7.2 Stage Two - Formal investigation:

If informal resolution is unsuccessful, or not appropriate, a formal complaint can be made by contacting Deaf Village Ireland by the above complaints methods i.e. written, or email. Upon a complaint being received by, or assigned to, the Complaints Officer (including a referral under section 48(2)), they shall notify, within five working days, the complainant, in writing, that the complaint has been so received or assigned and outline the steps that they propose to take in investigating the complaint and the time limits for the completion of the investigation. The matter will be dealt with immediately and fairly. Confidentiality will be upheld at all times.

7.3 Stage Three – Internal review:

If a complainant is not satisfied with recommendations made by the Complaints Officer, the complainant may apply in writing for a review to the Board of Deaf Village Ireland. Contact information for the Board of Management is available upon request.

8. Timeframes involved once a complaint is received:

A Complaints Officer will inform the complainant in writing, within five working days of making the decision, if the complaint will not be investigated and the reasons for it. Where the complaint will be investigated, the Complaints Officer will endeavour to investigate and conclude the investigation of a

complaint within thirty working days of the acknowledgement of the complaint. They may call on other staff, witnesses, experts and so on to assist with the investigation. If the complaint cannot be investigated and concluded within thirty working days of acknowledging the complaint, the complaints officer will communicate this to the complainant and relevant staff member within thirty days of acknowledging the complaint and give an indication of the time it will take to complete the investigation.

8.1: The Complaints Officer must update the complainant and relevant staff member every twenty working days until the matter is resolved.

8.2: The Complaints Officer must endeavour to investigate complaints within thirty working days. However, where the thirty working days time frame cannot be met despite every best effort, the complaints officer must endeavour to conclude the investigation of the complaint within six months of the receipt of the complaint. If this timeframe cannot be met, the complaints person must inform the complainant that the investigation is taking longer than six months, give an explanation why and outline the options open to the complainant.

8.3: The Deaf Village Ireland Complaints Officer is manager Sylvia Nolan. In instances of absenteeism, or a conflict of interests, the DVI Chairperson will act as the Complaints Officer.

9. Time limits for making a complaint:

The Complaints Officer must determine if the complaint meets the time frames as set out in Section 47, Part 9 of the Health Act 2004 which requires that: a complaint must be made within twelve months of the date of the action giving rise to the complaint or within twelve months of the complainant becoming aware of the action giving rise to the complaint.

9.1: A Complaints Officer may extend the time limit for making a complaint if in the opinion of the Complaints Officer special circumstances make it appropriate to do so. These special circumstances include but are not exclusive to the following:

- If the complainant is ill or bereaved;
- If new relevant, significant and verifiable information relating to the action becomes available to the complainant;
- If it is considered in the public interest to investigate the complaint;
- If the complaint concerns an issue of such seriousness that it cannot be ignored;
- Diminished capacity of the service user at the time of the experience e.g. mental health, critical/ long-term illness; and
- Where extensive support was required to make the complaint and this took longer than twelve months.

9.2: A Complaints officer must notify the complainant of a decision to extend/not extend time limits within five working days.

10. Anonymous complaints:

You can choose whether to make your feedback or complaint anonymous, or give your name and contact details. We encourage you to give your details, so that we can let you know the outcome after we investigate it. In general, we cannot investigate anonymous feedback or complaints against a named staff member. However, all anonymous complaints will be passed to the relevant Complaints Officer who will decide on the appropriate action. If you make a complaint by phone or in person, the member of staff taking the details of the complaint will encourage you to give your name and telephone number. They will tell you that unless you give a name and contact details, it may not be possible to investigate the complaint properly.

11. Redress:

An effective complaints system which offers a range of timely and appropriate remedies will enhance quality of service. Redress should be consistent and fair for both the complainant and the service against

which the complaint was made. Deaf Village Ireland offers forms of redress or responses that are appropriate and reasonable where it has been established that a measurable loss, detriment or disadvantage was suffered or sustained by the claimant personally. The redress includes:

- Apology;
- An explanation;
- Admission of fault;
- Change of decision;
- Replacement;
- Repair/rework;
- Correction of misleading or incorrect records; and
- Recommendation to make a change to a relevant policy if needed.

This Policy will approved at the Board meeting on 4th May 2021.