



Complaints

Policy Statement

The Harmony Therapy Trust believes that if a person wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. It is The Harmony Therapy Trust's policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments by service beneficiaries and their relatives and carers are taken seriously.

The policy is not designed to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to provide compensation. It is not part of The Harmony Therapy Trust's disciplinary policy.

The Harmony Therapy Trust believes that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems, service user dissatisfaction and possible litigation. The Harmony Therapy Trust supports the principle that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted at a local level between the complainant and The Harmony Therapy Trust. If this fails due to either The Harmony Therapy Trust or the complainant being dissatisfied with the result the complaint will be referred to another local charitable organisation.

The Harmony Therapy Trust complaints procedure complies fully with the current legislation and regulations.

Aim of the policy

The Harmony Therapy Trust aims is to ensure that its complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented and that service users feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

Goals

The goals of The Harmony Therapy Trust are to ensure the following.

- Any person who wishes to do so is aware of how to complain and that The Harmony Therapy Trust provides easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints.
- The Chair of Trustees will be responsible for the administration of the procedure.
- Every written complaint is acknowledged within two working days.
- Investigations into written complaints are held within 28 days.
- All complaints are responded to in writing by The Harmony Therapy Trust.
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to all involved.

The named complaints manager with responsibility for following through complaints for The Harmony Therapy Trust is Robert Nelson

In the event of the complaint involving alleged abuse or a suspicion that abuse has occurred, The Harmony Therapy Trust will refer the matter immediately to the Local Safeguarding Board manager. Usually the board will call a strategy meeting to decide on the actions to be taken next. This could entail an assessment of the allegation by a member of the Safeguarding Authority team.

Oral Complaints

- All oral complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, should be taken seriously.
- Therapists and Harmony volunteers who receive an oral complaint should seek to solve the problem immediately.
- If they cannot solve the problem immediately, they should offer to bring the matter to the attention of a Trustee to deal with the problem.
- All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous and sympathetic. There is nothing to be gained by any of us adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- At all times Therapists and Harmony volunteers should remain calm and respectful.
- Therapists and Harmony volunteers should not make excuses or blame others.
- If the complaint is being made on behalf of a beneficiary by an advocate it must first be verified that the person has permission to speak for the beneficiary, especially if confidential information is involved. It is very easy to assume that the advocate has the right or power to act for the beneficiary when they may not. If in doubt it should be assumed that the beneficiary's explicit permission is needed prior to discussing the complaint with the advocate.
- After talking the problem through, the person dealing with the complaint should suggest a course of action to resolve the complaint. If this course of action is acceptable then the Therapist or Harmony volunteer should clarify the agreement with the complainant and agree a way in which the results of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant (ie through another meeting or by letter).
- If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant then then they can be directed to Robert Nelson who should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing and give them a copy of The Harmony Therapy Trust's complaints procedure.
- In both cases details of the complaints should be recorded in a complaints book.

Written Complaints

Preliminary steps

- When a complaint is received in writing it should be passed on to the named complaints manager who should record it in the complaints book and send an acknowledgment letter within two working days. The complaints manager will be the named person who deals with the complaint through the process.
- If necessary, further details should be obtained from the complainant. If the complaint is not made by the beneficiary but on the beneficiary's behalf, then consent of the beneficiary, preferably in writing, must be obtained from the complainant.
- A leaflet detailing The Harmony Therapy Trust's procedure should be forwarded to the complainant. If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a legal advisor to The Harmony Therapy Trust. If legal action is taken at this stage any investigation by The Harmony Therapy Trust under the complaint's procedure should cease immediately.
- If the complainant is not prepared to have the investigation conducted by The Harmony Therapy Trust an intermediary must be appointed

- **Investigation of the Complaint**

- Immediately on receipt of the complaint should launch an investigation and within 28 days The Harmony Therapy Trust should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.
- If the issues are too complex to complete the investigation within 28 days, the complainant should be informed of any delays.

Meeting

- If a meeting is arranged the complainant should be advised that they may, if they wish, bring a friend or relative or a representative such as an advocate.
- At the meeting a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation should be given and also an apology if it is deemed appropriate (apologising for what has happened need not be an admission of liability).
- Such a meeting gives The Harmony Therapy Trust the opportunity to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.

Follow-up action

- After the meeting, or if the complainant does not want a meeting, a written account of the investigation should be sent to the complainant.
- The outcomes of the investigation and the meeting should be recorded in the complaints book and any shortcomings in procedures should be identified and acted upon.
- The Harmony Therapy Trustees should discuss any complaints and their outcome at Trustee meetings and the complaints procedure should be audited on an annual basis.

Date approved February 2020

Signed Robert Nelson

Review date February 2021