



## Horsham Area Council for Voluntary Service **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

(In the following Horsham Area Council for Voluntary Service has been abbreviated to “HACVS” and the word “user” means anyone who uses the services of HACVS directly or indirectly)

### **1. Introduction**

As an organisation, HACVS needs to be aware of its customers/users' needs. Organisations develop complaints procedures to handle complaints from their customers, as they arise.

If handled the right way, a complaints procedure enables staff and trustees to monitor and improve performance and relationships with the public - our users and customers.

The purpose of HACVS' Complaints Procedure is to:

- Protect the interests of individual service users;
- Improve the quality of services provided by this organisation by being responsive to the views of people affected by its services;
- Enable users, potential users and carers to challenge what may appear to be arbitrary decisions;
- Protect staff and volunteers from the consequences of what may otherwise appear to be arbitrary procedures for dealing with complaints on an ad hoc basis;
- Provide an additional means of monitoring the performance of this organisation;
- Maintain a customer care philosophy within this organisation.

### **2. Complaints Procedure**

The key element is that a complaint should be resolved, as far as possible, at source and the complainant encouraged discussing his/her complaint. All staff should try to help to ascertain if there may have been a misunderstanding.

2.1 Any member of staff is authorised to handle a complaint in a polite and understanding way. If the complaint is of a serious nature or if the customer is not satisfied, the matter should be referred to the Manager immediately.

2.2 If a complaint is made in writing, it must be acknowledged within five days of receipt. In the absence of the Manager, the person

making the complaint must be contacted and told who is looking into the complaint, what action will be taken and when a reply can be expected.

2.3 When attending an appointment to discuss the complaint with the Manager, the complainant may bring another person as support.

2.4 The Manager of HACVS is obliged to put a decision, in writing, to the complainant within 28 days of the original complaint.

2.5 If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of his/her complaint, arrangements will be made to deal with the complaint by an independent Review Panel. This Review Panel will consist of two members of the Executive Committee of HACVS and be chaired by someone from outside the organisation. (Independent person will be from CAB Management team)

2.6 Following a discussion with the complainant, the Review Panel is obliged to put a decision, in writing, to the complainant within 28 days of the panel meeting.

### **3. Recording of Complaints**

Complaints are to be recorded on special Complaints Forms and are to be dealt with and kept under confidential cover.

### **4. Complaints about other organisations**

Complaints about the National Health Service, Social Services or other statutory authorities should not be dealt with by HACVS, but referred to the authority concerned.

### **5. Compliments & Suggestions**

All compliments/comments and/or suggestions about HACVS are to be passed to the Manager and recorded in a special "Comments/Suggestions Book".

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**Address:** Lavinia House, Dukes Square, Denne Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1GZ

**HORSHAM AREA COUNCIL** for VOLUNTARY SERVICE

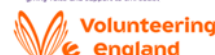
**Tel:** 01403 255277 ● **E mail:** hacvs@btinternet.com ● **Web:** www.hacvs.org

**Charity Number:** 1117718 ● **Company Number:** 5999908 ● **Registered in England and Wales**

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## Horsham Area Council For Voluntary Service

### COMPLAINTS & POLICY STATEMENT

Horsham Area Council for Voluntary Service is committed to a policy of responding positively to complaints and suggestions received from all its users.

There will be appropriate communication with all complainants and proposals of improvements.

All complaints will be recorded, acknowledged and impartially investigated.

Complaints will be dealt with quickly and informally wherever possible.

There is an established procedure for matters that cannot be informally resolved.

Applicants will have the right of appeal to a panel of trustees whose decisions will be final.

All complaints and decisions will be reported to the committee on a regular basis.

As agreed at HACVS  
Executive Meeting November 2005

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