

Complaints Policy and Procedure for Service Users

This policy and procedure applies to all children, young people and families using the services of TouchBase ('Service Users').

TouchBase recognises that service users have the right to a high standard of service delivery and that they have the right to complain if they are not happy with the services provided. We appreciate that we won't always get things right and view all complaints as a valuable source of feedback to help us learn lessons and improve what we do and how we do it.

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:

- Help us provide a service of the highest standard to all those who use the services of TouchBase.
- Help us ensure that children and families using, or wishing to use, our service know they have a right to complain about the service, that their complaint will be listened to and that appropriate action will be taken if a complaint is upheld
- Help us deal with complaints in a positive way and use them to improve our service.
- Set out the steps that children, young people and their families should take if they wish to make a complaint
- Set out how we deal with complaints in a fair and consistent way

How we deal with complaints

TouchBase handles complaints sensitively, thoroughly and impartially and we hope that the majority of complaints will be resolved informally through feedback and discussion. We aim to complete each stage of the process within 28 days unless an external agent (such as a commissioning body) is also involved, in which case the process may take longer.

TouchBase will:

- Ensure everyone knows about our complaints policy and how to access it:
 - Parents, Carers, children and young people - via the **Parent/Carer Consent to Engage with TouchBase** document issued to all parents/carers prior working with us and
 - **Team Members** - we ensure that as part of routine staff training and staff induction programmes, all team members are made aware of Touchbase's policy and procedure regarding complaints by service users

- Offer extra support to those who need help to make a complaint
- Offer a staged approach to complaints that takes account of the level of seriousness and the possibility of resolution at different stages
- Investigate each complaint as fully and objectively as we reasonably can
- Keep the complainant informed during the course of the investigation and of the outcome of the complaint
- Keep clear records of complaints and how they are resolved.

This policy and procedure is not to be used in the following circumstances:

- By TouchBase team members who are unhappy about their own experience in the workplace.
- To cover concerns that team members may have about issues of possible malpractice or wrongdoing in the workplace.
- If anyone, whether team member, child, young person or family member, is concerned that a child or children may be at risk of harm, they should use TouchBase's **Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 - Informal - If a parent, carer or child is unhappy with any aspect of the work provided by TouchBase, the first step is to discuss the matter informally with the lead practitioner involved who will make every effort to resolve the situation to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint. If possible an informal meeting will be held between the complainant and the practitioner to resolve any difficulties through discussion.

Stage 2 - Formal - If the complaint remains unresolved:

- The complainant will be asked to complete a Service User Complaint Form (available on request to info@touchbase.org.uk).
- The complainant will send the completed form to the relevant service manager or lead, either by email to info@touchbase.org.uk or by post to: TouchBase, 41-43 Portland Road, BN3 5DQ
- The service lead will begin a formal investigation to resolve the complaint within 28 days. The investigation is likely to involve the service lead speaking to the TouchBase team members involved, obtaining statements, reviewing the child's or service user's records and gathering other sources of information
- The complainant will receive a written formal response within 28 days. The response will outline:
 - The original complaint
 - The range and content of the investigation
 - The content of any statements obtained

➤ The conclusion reached by the investigation

- One copy of the complaint and report will be placed in the family file, if appropriate, and one in TouchBase's complaints file
- The commissioning authority will be sent a copy of the report

If the complainant remains unhappy with the formal response, they have 28 days to inform TouchBase of this. The service lead will then pass the complaint to the Clinical Director of TouchBase.

Stage 3 - Review by the Clinical Director of TouchBase.

The Clinical Director will be sent the complaint file and will carry out a review. This is likely to involve interviewing the service user about the complaint, as well as any practitioners that are involved in the complaint, reviewing the child's or service user's records, and gathering other sources of information.

The Clinical Director will complete a report containing clear conclusions and recommendations. A copy of the report will be sent to the complainant within 28 days and shared with the staff members involved in the complaint. The recommendations will be implemented by TouchBase as soon as practically possible and reviewed annually.

Should the complainant wish to pursue the complaint further within the organisation, they can make contact with our advisory board - please email emma@touchbase.org.uk.

Complainants are also at liberty to log any complaints against specific practitioners with the relevant governing bodies, The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and the UK Council for Psychotherapy.

If the complainant remains unsatisfied with TouchBase response and recommendations arising from the review by The Clinical Director, the service user should consider contacting the relevant Ombudsman for England or Wales or their MP:

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (England)

www.lgo.org.uk or 0300 061 0614

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