

Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedures

Date ratified: 30/1/2018

Date for review: 30/1/2019

1. Aim and Scope of the Policy

Zig Zag aims to provide an appropriate, respectful and ethical service to young women.

The aim of this policy is to provide service users with a mechanism to address concerns via providing feedback and/or lodging a complaint if they feel that a satisfactory standard of service is not met.

The scope of this policy includes young women accessing Zig Zag's services, their parents, guardians and support persons as well as community organisations who utilise Zig Zag's services who wish to provide feedback or lodge a complaint about the service that has been provided.

2. Policy Interpretations/Definitions

Feedback: a service user seeks improvement in a situation where they consider that appropriate standards have not been met. The service user perceives that the impact on her has not been substantial and seeks resolution in an informal way via talking directly to a worker or by using the Service User Feedback form.

Complaint: a formal process by which service users seeks some form of redress or change in a situation where they consider that there has been direct and significant adverse impact on her by a service they have received. The claim must be lodged in writing.

Support person: an external third party chosen by the service user to provide support through the feedback / complaints process. This support person may act as an advocate.

Investigation: a step within the formal complaints process which aims to discover whether claims made by service users can be substantiated. This is undertaken by an appropriate person, nominated by the staff team i.e. Complaint Investigator

Legal Process: serious claims of professional misconduct i.e. in relation to legislation such as Anti- Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Duty of Care.

Mediation: a step prior to the formal complaints process where an impartial third party assists the worker and service user to resolve the complaint.

3. Policy Statement

Zig Zag is committed to ensuring that all service users have access to information about the feedback and complaints process. Zig Zag is also committed to utilising

information gained through feedback and complaints to improve the quality of service provided.

Zig Zag service users have a right to provide feedback and/or make a complaint about the service they have been provided without fear of retribution and can expect complaints to be dealt with fairly and promptly.

4. Procedures

- Service users are to refer to Appendix A “Complaints flowchart for service users”. This provides an overview of the procedure for those making a complaint to Zig Zag.
- Workers and Management Committee are to refer to the Appendix B “Complaints flowchart for Workers”. This provides an overview of the procedure for those receiving and responding to complaints.

In addition to these documents the following procedures will apply:

- All service users will receive copies of the Statement of Young Women’s Rights and Responsibilities and the Zig Zag Feedback and Complaints Policy when first accessing services at Zig Zag. This Statement, and Complaints Forms, will be available in Zig Zag’s waiting area.
- In addition to being provided with written information, service users will be verbally advised of their right to make a complaint about the service they receive to Zig Zag, to an external complaints agency or to the Funding Body.
- Service users making complaints will be reassured that their rights to access Zig Zag services will not be affected for choosing to do so.
- All individuals in a complaints process have a responsibility to raise any conflicts of interest (see Zig Zag Conflicts of Interest Policy) in the complaints process. These will be assessed independently and addressed appropriately.
- Complaints about the service Manager will be managed by the Management Committee.
- Other Zig Zag staff members cannot be the support person/advocate for the complainant in the complaints process.
- As far as possible and not withstanding necessary investigation processes, all parties will endeavour to keep the details about feedback/complaints confidential.
- Where allegations are criminal in nature the organisation will refer onto, and assist the police in any way possible. Zig Zag workers and management committee members will not attempt to investigate criminal matters themselves.
- Procedure for lodging a complaint is based on the principles of natural justice. These principles apply to both parties:
 - The right to be heard. This means the right to a fair hearing with the opportunity to present one’s case.
 - The right to have a decision made by an unbiased decision maker.

- The right to have the decision based on specific examples rather than generalisations or assumptions.

(From www.newcastle.edu.au/services/legal/justice-fairness.html)

5. Authority, Accountability and Reporting

The Manager of Zig Zag is required to notify the Management Committee that a complaint has been lodged and to keep them informed of the handling and outcome of the complaint.

The Management Committee have the responsibility to be aware of the Zig Zag Feedback and Complaints policy and procedure and to ensure that all processes are consistent with this policy.

Workers and Management Committee members are accountable for receiving and responding to feedback and complaints in an appropriate and timely manner and following up with agreed actions as outlined in the procedures of handling feedback and complaints.

Service User feedback/complaints and all associated documentation must be kept on file:

- Anonymous feedback is kept in the Service User Feedback File
- Direct feedback / formal complaints is kept in the Complaints Register and young women's case file (confidential files).

6. Related Legislation/Policies/Other Documents

- Housing Regulation 2003 (Section 29)

7. List of Appendices

- Appendix 1: Complaints Flowchart for Service Users
- Appendix 2: Complaints Flowchart for Workers
- Appendix 3: Complaints Flyer
- Appendix 4: Service User Feedback Sheet

Ratified by: _____ **Management Committee**

Date Ratified: _____

Date Effective: _____

Review Timeframe: _____

