



# **AYRSHIRE CANCER SUPPORT**

## **Complaints Policy**



## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Ayrshire Cancer Support is committed to ensuring high standards in every aspect of our organisation. Despite our best efforts, things sometimes go wrong, and we have developed a Complaints Policy to help you let us know when this happens. We believe an effective complaints procedure can contribute to the effectiveness of our service and this policy document sets out a procedure to enable you to complain about any aspect of our organisation.
- 1.2 We do all we can to ensure that members of staff and volunteers uphold our high standards, and we welcome being informed when they have been less than satisfactory. Complaints should be made constructively and every effort will be made to resolve them at an early stage.
- 1.3 Where possible, a copy of this policy will be made available in other formats or languages upon request.
- 1.4 Any party involved in a complaint is entitled to state a conflict of interest to either the Chief Executive, Chairperson or Head of People as may be applicable.
- 1.5 If you require assistance to fully understand our complaints procedure this can be provided by our Chief Executive or our Head of People or by our Chairperson or Company Secretary of our Board of Directors. You may also take advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

## **2. Our Definition of a Complaint**

- 2.1 An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, or an action or omission by a member of staff or volunteer of Ayrshire Cancer Support.

## **3. Who Can Make a Complaint**

- 3.1 A complaint can be made by a user of our services or any other person affected or likely to be affected by the action or decisions by a member of staff or volunteer of Ayrshire Cancer Support.
- 3.2 A complaint can also be made by someone acting on behalf of the user or person, with their consent.
- 3.3 A complaint can also be made by one member of staff or volunteer against another member of staff or volunteer of Ayrshire Cancer Support.

## **4. How to Complain**

- 4.1 If you find cause to complain with any aspect of our organisation, please tell us by whatever means is most convenient for you e.g. telephone, letter, e-mail, face to face or via the contacts page on our website. If you wish to make your complaint in

writing but are unable to do so for any reason, we will provide assistance for you to do so.

- 4.2 You should make your complaint as soon as possible, and in any case within 6 months for it to be effectively investigated; depending on the circumstances this time limit may be extended by a further six months.
- 4.3 We will only be able to investigate anonymous complaints if serious issues are involved, or if some form of proof of the complaint is made available. Even though we cannot respond to an anonymous complainant we will still take appropriate action if an anonymous complaint is upheld.

## **5. How Complaints are Dealt With**

### **5.1 Informal Complaints**

- 5.1.1 Most complaints are likely to be received by a member of staff or volunteer either in person or by telephone. If an error or lapse in service delivery has occurred, it should be possible to resolve the matter quickly and decisively.

In this way most complaints should be resolved with no further action necessary. These 'informal' complaints will be recorded to enable management to identify and review service issues and identify any common problems.

- 5.1.2 If your complaint cannot be dealt with immediately, or you wish to make a formal complaint, you will be advised of the procedure for doing this. If there are any doubts as to whether your complaint is formal or informal the member of staff receiving your complaint will verify this with you.

### **5.2 Formal Complaints**

- 5.2.1 Formal written complaints should be submitted to the Chief Executive at the address shown on page 4 of this policy. The Chief Executive will inform the Chairperson or Company Secretary and Head of People of the nature of the complaint. Receipt of your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
- 5.2.2 You will be kept fully informed of the progress of your complaint and once it has been investigated you will be informed of the outcome.
- 5.2.3 We aim to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible and most should be resolved within 21 working days. If the details of the complaint are complex the investigation may take longer, you will be kept fully informed.
- 5.2.4 The Chief Executive, or Chairperson/Company Secretary where applicable, can stop the complaint at any point in the investigation, if it becomes apparent that legal action has been instructed, until after any legal process is complete.

## 6. Appeals Process

- 6.1 If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint please write back to the Chief Executive and Head of People, within one month of receiving your reply.
- 6.2 If you cannot reach agreement with the Chief Executive your complaint will be referred, in complete confidence, to the next Board Meeting of Directors. You will be informed of the date of that meeting. If the complaint has been made by a member of staff against another member of staff the formal Disciplinary / Grievance Procedure may also be used.
- 6.3 Following the Board Meeting the Chairperson will advise the complainant in writing of the decision reached. If the decision is that further investigation is required the necessary arrangements will be made for both parties to be interviewed separately, and each party may choose to bring a representative to those meetings.
- 6.4 If after this exhaustive procedure agreement cannot be reached, we are willing to bring in a third party to listen to both sides and offer advice. This procedure will only be used where the complaint is of a serious nature. The mediator has no legal powers but can help to clarify the situation. The mediator will:
- Help to define the problem
  - Review the action
  - Suggest further ways which may resolve it
  - Keep an agreed written record of any meetings held and the advice given
  - Keep all discussions confidential
- 6.5 If a formal complaint relates to a counselling member of staff a ***Report to COSCA at Conclusion of Complaints Proceedings*** form will be submitted to COSCA.
- 6.6 If an unresolved complaint involves our fundraising practices you can contact the Fundraising Standards Board (until it is replaced by the new Fundraising Regulator). They will investigate your complaint in order to help resolve the matter. You must submit your complaint to them within 8 weeks of receiving our final response. Our Charity Registration Number is SC016098.

### Contact Details:

Ayrshire Cancer Support, 5 Dundonald Road, Kilmarnock, KA1 1EQ.

Chief Executive: Karen McIntyre  
Company Secretary: Thiona McQuiston

Chairperson: Ian Welsh  
Head of People: Barry Hunter

Tel: 01563 538008 Email: [hr@ayrshirecs.org](mailto:hr@ayrshirecs.org) Web: [www.ayrshirecs.org](http://www.ayrshirecs.org)