

<p><b>Status: Policy</b> –overall statement of the position, intention and direction of the organisation anchored in the values and principles of the organisation.</p>	<p><b>Policy No:</b> SQ 06  <b>Revision No:</b> 0  <b>Date Approved:</b> Oct 09  <b>Review Date:</b> Oct 10</p>
<p><b>Title:</b> Complaints Management Policy</p>	
<p><b>Written by:</b> Complaints Management Working Group</p>	
<p><b>Approved by:</b></p>	
<p><b>Cross Reference:</b> Complaints Management Procedures, Adult Protection Framework Human Resources Grievance Procedure, Supporting Advocacy in Cheshire Handbook, Confidentiality Policy, Dignity at Work Policy for the Health Services.</p>	

### 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the policy of Cheshire Ireland in relation to complaints management. This policy aims to assure a standardised approach to the management of complaints within the organisation, which is consistent with the core values of Cheshire Ireland and our statutory requirements under the Health Act 2004 and promotes continuous quality improvement within the services provided.

### 2.0 Scope

This policy and supporting procedure covers all staff and people using Cheshire services and they are required to have an awareness and understanding of these documents and their responsibilities. This policy is applicable to the management of complaints and feedback in relation to services provided by Cheshire Ireland and for use by people living within or utilising Cheshire Ireland services. It also addresses the reporting and management of all complaints by family members, advocates and the general public in relation to Cheshire services. This policy also covers complaints between individuals using Cheshire Ireland services. Complaints in relation to allegations of abuse will be managed using the Adult Protection Framework. Complaints relating to protected disclosure are also not covered under this process.

### 3.0 Definitions

#### Complaint:

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the organisation or service provided by Cheshire Ireland that is made by people using the service, their families, advocates and the general public for which a remedy/response is sought and that needs the involvement of management and staff.

The Health Act 2004, defines a complaint as any action that it is claimed, does not accord with fair or sound administrative practice, and adversely affects the person by whom or on whose behalf the complaint is made (Health Act 2004).

**Feedback:**

Feedback means the return of information about the result of a process or activity (thefreedictionary.com). In organisational terms, feedback can express either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with any aspect of the organisation or service provided by Cheshire Ireland or it can be a neutral statement of fact.

**The Management of Complaints:**

The management of complaints means the process of receiving, handling, investigation, recording, reporting and reviewing complaints received.

**Protected Disclosure:**

Protected disclosure can be defined as any good faith communication that discloses or demonstrates an intention to disclose information that may provide evidence of improper conduct which raises a significant danger to public health or safety. It provides legal safeguards for people who want to report serious concerns they have about standards of safety or quality in Irish health and social care services (HIQA, 2009).

**4.0 Policy Statement**

It is the policy of Cheshire Ireland that:

- All people using Cheshire Ireland services will be encouraged and supported to speak up about issues concerning them regarding the provision of Cheshire services.
- All complaints will be managed in a standardised systematic, planned, controlled and fair and transparent manner.
- All complaints and feedback received (whether written or verbal) will be taken seriously and acted on in confidence and without prejudice.
- Complaints will be responded to within the shortest possible timeframe.
- Complaints will be managed in a sensitive, respectful and confidential manner.
- All complaints will be viewed as an opportunity to inform service provision and complaints information will be integrated into organisational improvement activities and used to continuously improve the quality of service provision.
- Every effort will be made to safeguard the rights and dignity of the people using Cheshire Ireland services and staff members in the implementation of this policy.
- Complainants will not be victimised or suffer any retribution in any aspect of their future service provision.
- Information will be widely available to all staff, people using Cheshire Ireland services, their family members and the public on how to make a complaint, provide feedback/comments and how these will be managed.
- Communication will be maintained at all times and within the appropriate timeframes with all parties involved in the process.
- Complaints which are found to be vexatious will not be pursued and will be dealt with in a serious manner.

## **5.0 Policy in Relation to Specific Responsibilities**

### **Cheshire Ireland**

The Board of Directors of Cheshire Ireland, through its CEO is responsible for ensuring that it meets the requirements of part 9 of the Health Act 2004. Cheshire Ireland is responsible for providing a report containing their complaints statistics to the HSE on an annual basis.

### **Regional Managers & Service Quality Manager**

The Service Quality Manager is responsible for ensuring that all staff members and people living in Cheshire Ireland services and their families receive appropriate information and support in the implementation of this policy. The Service Quality Manager is also responsible for ensuring that adequate information regarding the policy and procedures is widely available throughout each service.

The Regional Manager is responsible for the management of complaints within their region. They also have the responsibility for the development of an action plan and monitoring the implementation of recommendations from completed investigations. The Regional Manager also has the responsibility (in conjunction with the Service Quality Officers) for the monitoring and review of complaints data / statistics on a quarterly basis.

### **Service Managers**

**Policy Availability:** The Service Manager is responsible for ensuring that a copy of this document is available to people receiving a Cheshire service, their families, advocates and all Cheshire Ireland staff and that they are aware of and understand its contents.

Note: All staff must sign the "Policy read and understood" sheet in their area

**Management of Staff:** It is the responsibility of the Service Manager to ensure the staff in the service have received information and training as necessary and are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the management of complaints.

**Complaints Management:** The Service Manager has a role in resolving the informal local resolution of complaints and conducting a preliminary enquiry of a complaint. They also have a role in ensuring the recommendations of the investigation report are implemented within the relevant timeframes.

**Data Management:** The Service Manager has the responsibility for the collation of monthly statistics regarding complaints in their service.

**Future Learning:** It is the responsibility of the centre/service manager to ensure all feedback and learning regarding complaints within the service are discussed with all staff during team meetings.

### **Individuals appointed to investigate complaints**

These individuals are responsible for fully investigating all complaints and communicate at all times (within the recommended timeframes) with the complainant and any staff members/ services users/ families/advocates involved in the investigation. It is the responsibility of these individuals to ensure every effort is made to resolve all complaints fairly and in the most appropriate manner. They also have responsibility to ensure the confidentiality of the process and for the collation of an investigation report following the conclusion of the investigation.

### **Individual Staff Responsibility**

All Cheshire Ireland staff have an obligation to deal appropriately with and effectively with any complaint made to them, either through dealing with the complaint at the point of contact or, where appropriate, reporting the complaint to the Service Manager in accordance with the complaints management procedures. Staff must also support a person receiving a Cheshire service to make a complaint if requested to do so by the person. It is the responsibility of every staff member to fully cooperate in any investigation process, where necessary. All staff have an obligation to participate in complaints management training and have knowledge regarding the appropriate management of complaints. It is the responsibility of all staff to share the learning from complaints with their colleagues and, where possible, initiate service improvement and organisational change.