



# **NATIONAL GUIDELINES**

**No: G304(08)**

## **COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES FOR PEOPLE WHO USE OUR SERVICE**

May 2004

**September 2007**

November 2008

**NATIONAL GUIDELINES**  
**ON**  
**COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES**  
**FOR PEOPLE**  
**WHO USE OUR SERVICES**

Signed: *Winifred O'Hanrahan*  
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Winifred O'Hanrahan  
National Chief Executive

Date: May 2004  
Revised: September 2007  
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## **Our Commitment to Providing a Quality Service**

The Brothers of Charity Services is committed to providing a high quality service to all. People who use the service are recognised as stakeholders in our services and their views are solicited in the preparation of national and local company strategies, policies and plans. Individuals and families also give feedback on their experience of care; this is a right and is welcome, as it helps the Brothers of Charity Services to improve continuously. The National Health Strategy 'Quality and Fairness' includes in its vision "A Health System that encourages you to have your say, listens to you, and ensures that your views are taken into account". It also refers in Action Point 49, to proposed legislation and statutory complaints procedures.

While we work hard to provide a high quality service, we are aware that sometimes people who use the service feel they did not receive as good a service as they expected. As a result, and in keeping with our open policy we have introduced a complaints procedure.

### **Complaints Covered by our Procedure.**

This complaints procedure covers complaints about issues such as delays, mistakes and poor service.

- Instance where a person did not receive the quality of service from the services to which he/she felt they are entitled to.
- Instance where a person felt he/she were unfairly treated.
- Instance where people feel the service or individuals did not uphold the Ethos of the Brothers of Charity Services.
- Instance where people feel their agreed personal development plan is not being followed.

### **The complaints procedure does not cover:**

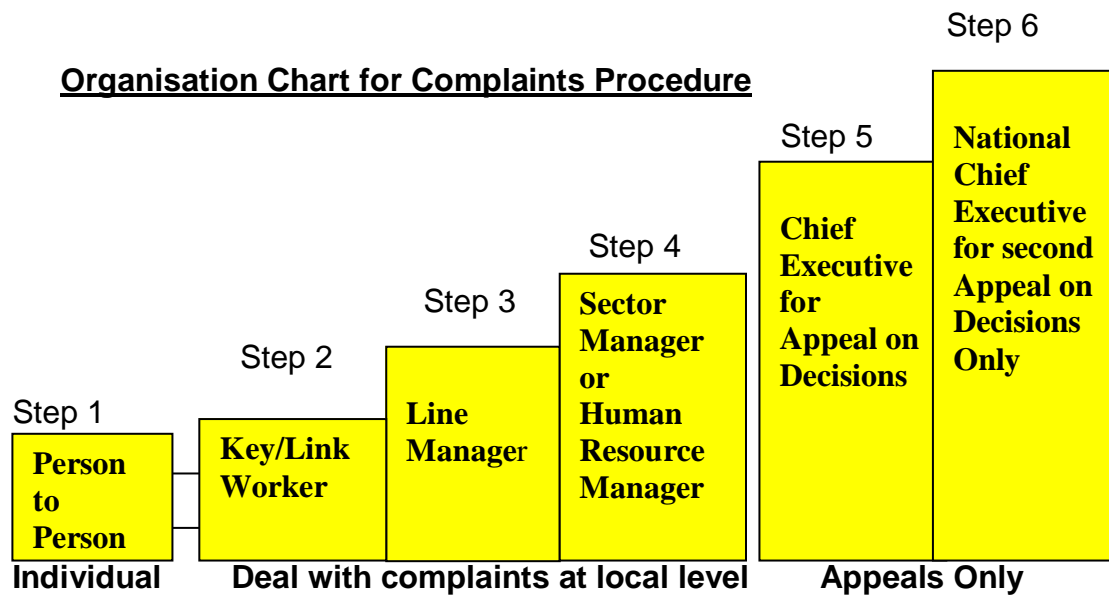
- Matters of policy.
- Complaints relating to a hospital or health board, in such instances people should be directed to the agency concerned.
- Matters that are subject to litigation.
- Matters that are dealt with under specific procedures such as allegations of abuse.
- Matters that have been referred to the Ombudsman or Information Commissioner.

### **Common Characteristics for Complaints Procedures**

Each Company will have its own process and the complainant should be informed of the process. The Brothers of Charity complaints system will comprise a set of processes, across services, which have the following common characteristics:

- People find the system easy to use (accessibility)
- 'People-centeredness' will be to the fore in developing procedures.
- Complaints where possible to be resolved at local management level.
- Complaints should, where possible, be received in writing; if the person cannot write every effort should be made to aid the person through the use of video, tape or dictation.
- Staff are open - they continuously look for feedback and they act when a complaint is received.
- Complaints are received and acted on as close to the point of service provision as possible.
- The complaints processes are simple and written in plain English.
- The processes are respectful of the rights and dignity of all concerned.
- Staff in operating the complaints process, are appropriately and continuously trained in this aspect of work.
- Complaints and feedback are analysed and audited for patterns, changes and opportunities to improve services.

- Complaints processes are regarded as linked to the ongoing development of individual support, quality improvement, risk management and Freedom of Information.



### **Our Standards for Dealing With Complaints**

- We will treat your complaint properly, fairly and impartially.
- We promise that making a complaint will have no adverse implications for your dealings with the Services.
- A person other than those persons originally involved will examine your complaint.
- We will examine and review your complaint and keep you informed on a weekly basis. Where it is not possible to meet this target, we will inform you and continue to do so until the matter is resolved.
- We will apologise for any mistake, for which we are responsible, explain what happened and put it right wherever possible.
- We will change the way things are done to avoid making the same mistake in future.

## **External Complaints Mechanisms**

If you have exhausted all internal appeals mechanisms, it might be useful to contact any of the following agencies:

- a. Your local Health Board.
- b. The National Disability Authority
- c. The Office of the Ombudsman, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2

This procedure does not preclude you from the choice of taking your complaint through the Civil Courts on a point of law, up to and including the European Courts.