



THE LANTERN COMMUNITY  
*“living, learning and working together”*

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## COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Prepared by The Lantern Management Group and endorsed by The Lantern Community Trustee Board

Procedure dated: 25 November 2009

Implemented in January 2010

Reviewed in February 2011, February 2012

Date of last review: September 2013

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

**Lantern Community:** The organisation responsible for providing the care and support services

**Companion:** Beneficiary of the charity; adult at risk who is receiving the care and support services

**Co-worker:** A person who works on a voluntary basis for Lantern Community which provides personal care and support services for adults with learning disabilities or mental health problems.

**Employee:** A person who works for the Lantern Community which provides personal care and support services for adults with learning disabilities or mental health problems.

## INTRODUCTION

The Lantern Community is committed to the continuing maintenance of high standards but from time to time there may be those who wish to express concerns or dissatisfaction with those standards. This Policy has been formed around the need to be open and transparent yet ever vigilant when caring for those entrusted to the Lantern Community for their needs and support.

The Lantern Community aims to ensure:

- The companions/their relatives/representatives or the public know how to give feedback, complain and compliment the Lantern Community and can do so easily – with support if they need it and without fear of being victimised.
- Complainants are kept informed about the investigation following their complaint.
- At all stages the person concerned will be given a fair hearing and ample opportunity to explain his/her case, with representation if desired.
- All stages of the procedure will be conducted in strictest confidence and only those in the community who have a need to know will be made aware of the situation.
- Individuals or groups making a complaint receive a full explanation and are offered a solution and where appropriate an apology.
- Employees and the co-workers are confident and professional to manage complaints fairly, honestly, constructively and sensitively. If required, employees and co-workers will receive training in dealing with and encouraging complaints.
- Complaints are resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, within the stated time frame, in the most effective way, causing the minimum of difficulty, inconvenience and stress.
- Accurate records of every aspect of the procedure, the decisions taken and the outcome of any hearings are maintained.
- Feedback, complaints and compliments are used to identify, share and then implement, any required service improvements.

Our policy is to always handle any complaints made in accordance with the procedure set out below using a thorough and balanced approach. The Lantern Community expects that the overarching principles of transparency, honesty, sensitivity and fairness will continuously underpin how we handle complaints whilst upholding the highest standards of confidentiality.

The Lantern Community regards any complaint as an important measure of the quality of human relationships; communication, support and community endeavour and therefore periodic reviews are essential and will be undertaken regarding the handling performance, quantity, type and the final outcomes of all complaints made. This review will be conducted by The Lantern Community Trustee Board (the membership of the Board contains individuals from outside the Community with various professional qualifications and expertise and parents of companions).

Nothing in this Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure negates the complainants right to report matters of concern to an external regulatory body, for example: the local Social Services, companion's social worker ; East Boro Housing Trust if the companion has concerns/complaints about his housing management and if applicable, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), (Addresses for correspondence are on page 5.), the Police, or any other appropriate department of the local authority or National Health Service, local government Ombudsman, an elected Member of Parliament or local Councilor etc.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The procedure consists of a number of stages, which are set out in the table at the end of this document.

### **STAGE 1**

- a. Anyone who wishes to make a complaint can do so by contacting the main office at the Lantern Community. The Lantern Community aims to settle the majority of complaints quickly and satisfactorily by the Registered Manager. The complaint may be resolved quickly by way of an apology, by providing the service required or by providing an acceptable explanation to the individual.  
At this point the complainant will be reminded of their right to put their complaint in writing if they wish to.
- b. If the complaint is about the Lantern Management Group, the complainant will be advised to contact the Chairman of the Lantern Community Trustee Board.
- c. As in all stages, The Lantern Community will ensure that any person or partner/spouse of such a person involved in any complaint will not be part of any investigation or response team.
- d. The Lantern Community will consider a formal complaint in the form of letters, e-mails or verbal communication.
- e. All complaints, either verbal or written will be referred to and addressed to the Registered Manager who will appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation. This investigation will be conducted in a thorough but timely fashion by a senior staff.
- f. The appointed individual who will investigate the complaint should reply verbally as soon as possible but in any case will respond in writing within two working days to acknowledge receipt of the complaint. Following this acknowledgment, the investigation will take place within 15 working days.
- g. A record of the fact that the discussion, if any took place should be kept. The response to the issues raised will be given by the appointed individual who investigated the complaint. However, once the investigation has concluded the person conducting the investigation will consult with the Registered Manager before responding to the complainant.

- h. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation and response, they may appeal to the Lantern Community Trustee Board within 15 days of receiving the response. The Lantern Community Trustee Board will appoint an Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel will only consist of trustees and will not include anyone who has any previous knowledge of the complaint. Any appeal must be made to the Chair of The Lantern Community Trustee Board in writing clearly stating the reasons for the appeal.
- i. If the complaint is about a case of alleged abuse then the Registered Manager and/or Safeguarding Adult Co-ordinator will be contacted immediately in line with the Lantern Community Safeguarding Adult Policy and Procedures.

## **STAGE 2**

- a. The Lantern Community Trustee Board Appeal Panel formed from trustees with the CQC Nominated Individual will meet to consider the appeal within 15 days of receiving the complainants appeal and will fully examine the reasons for the appeal and if appropriate conduct a re-investigation.
- b. Any re-investigation will take place within 15 working days and the complainant will be informed about the process, which is undertaken.
- c. The Lantern Community Trustee Board Appeal Panel will arrange to meet with the complainant (the complainant will be given adequate notice of the meeting) and hear and record any relevant evidence. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing within five working days of the meeting taking place.
- d. The Lantern Community Trustee Board Appeal Panel having made their decision and advised the complainant of their decision will also advise the complainant of their right of appeal to the external organisations, if the complainant is still dissatisfied. Addresses for complaints to The Lantern Community and the local authority addresses are given on page 5.
- e. The records of the investigation and the outcome of the meeting should be filed along with the original letter or form from the complainant.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS**

The Lantern Community will review all complaints received at least once every twelve months and report the outcome of this review to The Lantern Community Trustee Board. This process will examine the number and nature of complaints made, and examines how complaints were handled. The purpose of the review will be to identify what lessons can be learned from the complaints and how these have impacted upon the community and the support offered.

## **DATA PROTECTION**

To process a complaint, The Lantern Community will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides and which other people give in response to investigating the complaint. The Lantern Community will hold this data securely and only use it to help address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public by The Lantern Community. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, individuals have a right to obtain a copy of their personal data. However, there are exceptions to this right. The Lantern Community will normally destroy its complaints files in a secure manner six years after the complaint has been made or the complaint closed.

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage	Action by	Written record	Right of representation	Right of Referral	Referred to
<b>Stage 1</b>	An appointed person by Registered Manager or Registered Manager himself/herself	Verbal response and written response within 2 working days – recorded in writing and files, the outcome in 15 working days	Yes	Yes	The Lantern Community Trustee Board
<b>Stage 2</b>	The Lantern Community Trustee Board Appeal Panel and the Nominated Individual	Letter confirming outcome and right of referral within 15 working days	Yes	Yes	External Bodies such as Supporting People, Social services etc. See the list, page 5
<b>Stage 3</b>	External Bodies such as Supporting People, Social services etc.	-	Yes	-	-

## CONTACT DETAILS

<p>Registered Manager Lantern Community Folly Farm Lane Ringwood BH24 2NN Tel. 01425 482444 Email: <a href="mailto:info@lanterncommunity.org.uk">info@lanterncommunity.org.uk</a></p>	<p>The Chairperson of the Lantern Community Trustee Board Lantern Community Folly Farm Lane Ringwood BH24 2NN</p>
<p>Complaints Manager Adult&amp;Community Services Dorset County Council ,County Hall Dorchester Dorset DT1 1XJ</p>	<p>Care Quality Commission National Correspondence Citygate Gallowgate Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4PA Tel: 03000 6161 Email: <a href="mailto:southwest@cqc.org.uk">southwest@cqc.org.uk</a></p>
<p>Dorset Police Station (Ferndown) Police Station Ameysford Road Ferndown, Ringwood, BH22 9HQ Tel: (01202) 222222 non-emergency 101 in county</p>	<p>Dorset Adult And Community Services Dorset County Council Penny's Walk Ferndown BH22 9JY Tel: 01202 877445</p>

The Lantern Community  
**Register of Complaints**

Complaint made by whom	Date complaint made	Outcome i.e. Upheld Partly Upheld Not Upheld	Date outcome notified to complainant	Signed	Date
<p><b>Enter brief details of complaint below</b></p>					
<p><b>ACTION POINTS:</b></p>					
<p>If complaint has been referred by us to either the police or social services under the Lantern Community Safeguarding Adult Policy and Procedures , please enter required details below</p>					
Agency to whom referred	Date referred	Name of person to whom matter was referred		Signed	Date