



Policy & Procedures Portfolio

# The Eddystone Trust

## **ETHICS, EMPOWERMENT AND IMPROVEMENT:**

# Complaints Procedure

Version No: 3

### **Notice to staff using a paper copy of this guidance**

**The Policies and Procedures Portfolio Folder of the shared drive holds the most recent and approved version of this guidance. Staff must ensure they are using the most recent guidance.**

**December 2010**

## Policy Details and Purpose

Title	<b>Complaints Procedure</b>
Subject	<b>The Management of the Complaints Procedure</b>
Summary	<p>This policy provides instruction and guidance on the management of the complaints procedure to all staff employed by The Eddystone Trust.</p> <p>The Director, Operations Manager, All Team Leaders throughout the organisation are required to instigate action to ensure the successful implementation of the policy within their area(s) of control.</p>
Job Title of Person / People Responsible for Review	<p><b>Mags Davies – Director</b></p> <p><b>Maureen Bromage - Operations Manager</b></p>

### Review History

Version No.	Type of Change	Date	Originator of Change	Description of Change
1	New Document	April 2006	John McConnell	New document
2	Review	November 2007	Marcy Fisher	Review
3	Review	December 2010	Maureen Bromage	Review

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## Policy Statement

The following statement will be displayed in the centre:

We aim to provide service of a standard acceptable to all our service users.

If we fail to do this we want to know about it. This will enable us not only to deal with the specific problem, but also to avoid it happening again.

Our complaints procedure sets out how to take up matters you think are unsatisfactory about the service you have received from us. Ask a worker here for more information.

## Introduction

This policy sets out the procedures we will follow when we receive a complaint from users of the service, an organisation or member of the public. It does not address complaints made by staff members or volunteers (dealt with through grievance and disciplinary procedures), nor job applicants (recruitment procedure).

This procedure is meant to provide a means to resolve a dispute between Eddystone and any complainant. It requires staff, and possibly trustees, at every stage to try to resolve the complaint at the earliest opportunity. Complaints are likely to be in one or more of the following areas:

- dissatisfaction with our service, such as inadequate work, problems with case work, unacceptable delay or failure to deliver a service etc
- disputes between a service user and the organisation regarding policy, procedures or activities
- discourtesy or unhelpfulness on the part of the staff

## The Procedure

When someone wishes to register a complaint, the following procedure should be adopted. Where the complaint is against the Director, the same procedure will be followed, but with the Chair of the Board of Trustees substituting for the Director's role at all stages.

- **Preliminary stage**

Wherever possible an issue should be resolved before a complaint is made. This requires all staff to be aware of and sensitive to any dissatisfaction that may be expressed by a service user or other potential complainant. Where reasonable and practicable, immediate efforts should be made to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the potential complainant while remaining within Eddystone's operating procedures and policies.

If this is not possible the complaint should be received either via completion of a complaints form or by request to make a verbal complaint. It should at this point be entered on the Complaints Log maintained by the Head of Administration.

- **Stage 1**

The complainant should be invited to speak to the appropriate line manager or the Director to discuss the complaint with them. This can be done in person or by phone, whichever is appropriate. The line manager should keep a record of the conversation. The line manager will endeavour to resolve the matter, liaising with the Director.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, or where it is not possible to use Stage 1 (for example if it is not convenient for them to phone or visit the office) then refer to Stage 2 below.

N.B. Stage 1 should be completed within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.

- **Stage 2**

The complainant should be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Director, marked Private and Confidential, providing as much detail of the complaint as possible.

If the complainant is not able to put their complaint in writing the complainant will be offered an interview with the Director or her/his nominee. (In the event the Director is unavailable, one of the Head of Services will deputise, other than where the chair of trustees is more appropriate.) The role of the Director or nominee at this meeting will be confined to putting the complaints in writing, obtaining the complainant's approval for the contents of this, and asking the complainant to sign to indicate they agree with the contents. The complainant may choose to work with a third party at this stage and throughout the process.

The Director will then investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve it. The Director may delegate any aspect of the investigation to a nominee.

If the complaint involves a member(s) of staff the Director should offer the opportunity for the member of staff to put forward their account, either by written statement or by presentation.

The Director will ensure that all complaints receive a response in writing within 10 working days of the letter/complaint notes being received. This letter will summarise what investigations have been carried out and what action, if any, is proposed to resolve the matter. A copy of this letter should be attached to the complaints form.

If a response by letter is unsuitable, the complainant will be offered an interview with the Director to provide the response verbally. This meeting should be held within 10 working days, as before. A written record of this interview will be kept and signed by the complainant.

If the complainant is not satisfied at this stage they should ask for the matter to be dealt with under Stage 3 of the complaints procedure.

- **Stage 3**

Where the matter is not resolved by stage 2, the Director should immediately refer the complainant to the Board of Trustees, sending copies of all written correspondence to members.

The Trustees, or a working party appointed by them, will then form a Complaints Panel and appoint a Complaint's Officer. They will inform the complainant immediately that this is being done and that the Panel will also be contacting the staff member(s) against whom the complaint is made.

The Panel will review the decision made at Stage 3 and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved.

**N.B.** The Complaints Panel will notify the complainant of its reasons and decision within 15 working days of having received notice of complaint. The Panel's decision will be final. The Complaints Officer will be responsible for ensuring records of the meeting are kept and any complaints monitoring form is completed.

The Complaints Officer will be responsible for reporting the Panel's findings to the next meeting of the Board.

### **Recording and Monitoring Complaints**

All complaints will be recorded and kept on file, including those which were resolved without being put in writing. A Complaints Monitoring form shall be used to do this. All complaints shall be treated in line with the Confidentiality policy.

The Director will make a report once a year to the Board, when relevant, summarising the nature of complaints received and how they were resolved.

### **Publicising the Procedure**

The Director and Head of Administration are responsible for ensuring that posters and any relevant leaflets are displayed in the waiting area and interview rooms welcoming complaints from users and that the posters and leaflets clearly explain the procedure for making a complaint.

The Directors and appropriate Heads of Services are responsible for ensuring complaints leaflets are available at all outreach sessions and on home visits.