



COMPLAINTS & COMMENTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

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PURPOSE:

To establish the policy and procedure of Atal y Fro with regard to complaints and comments from service users and other stakeholders and how these will be used to improve the range and quality of services.

WHO THIS APPLIES TO: Service User and Stakeholders

Approved by & date	Next review date
Thomas Carroll October 2018	October 2021

INTRODUCTION

This document contains a policy statement (Part One) and procedural guidance (Part Two). The functions of each are set out briefly below.

Part One – Policy Statement. The policy statement sets out the broad framework of principles within which the particular area of work will be carried out. It sets out the organisation’s broad style and approach to the issue, including any aims and guiding principles.

Part Two – Procedural Guidance. The procedural guidance sets out the detail staff require carrying out their duties in this particular area of work. It also sets out the specific tasks involved in undertaking this area of work and identifies who is responsible for carrying them out.

PART ONE – POLICY STATEMENT

1. AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Atal y Fro seeks to provide a responsive service, to meet the needs of women and their families experiencing domestic abuse.

At all times, Atal y Fro welcomes comments and feedback from service users, individuals and organisations about the service they have received, or the services we provide. Feedback and comments will be collated and evaluated in order to attain, maintain and develop quality service delivery.

- a. Atal y Fro are committed to encouraging service users and stakeholders to come forward with any complaints, comments or compliments about the services delivered in order to make sure that quality is protected and service users’ needs are appropriately met.
- b. Atal y Fro undertake to monitor all comments and complaints to ensure that they are used to improve the range and quality of service delivery on a continuous basis.
- c. Atal y Fro will also ensure that all service users and stakeholders have access to clear information on how to voice complaints and comments. Service users in particular will be provided with the support they need in order to make their views known. Atal y Fro will also ensure that no service users are disadvantaged or treated less favourably as a result of complaining or making comments.
- d. Atal y Fro will actively encourage service users and external organisations to comment and provide feedback on the services we provide. We will do this in a number of ways:
 - Responding to and recording verbal comments and compliments, both in the refuge and in the community in the Comments Log

- Encouraging all service users to complete an Exit Survey upon leaving
 - Regular House Meetings in Refuges, where women will be encouraged to give feedback about their experiences of using our services
 - Evaluation of all formal events, workshops, training sessions, and conferences
-
- Recording, monitoring, and reporting complaints and comments to the Trustee Board
 - Service users will be enabled to make comments and complaints through a process that meets the needs of the diverse communities we serve. This may include providing translated information, interpretation (including sign language interpretation), and information in alternative formats, where necessary.

PART TWO – PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE ON COMPLAINTS & COMMENTS

2. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS FROM SERVICE USERS

- If a service user wishes to complain or make a comment about the services they are receiving, or any other aspect of their experience whilst being supported by Atal y Fro, they can do this by speaking with a Support Worker.
- Complaints and comments are generally things which are **about the service**. If a complaint is about the **conduct** of a particular member of staff it should trigger the disciplinary process if it reflects any of the areas of misconduct listed in that policy. This policy will be followed where appropriate after the service user has put their complaint in writing. They should be advised prior to doing this that if it is about a member of staff it may lead to an investigation under the disciplinary process.
- Should the service user not feel comfortable discussing their complaint with a Support Worker for whatever reason, they can complain to a Line Manager or Trustee.
- Once a service user wishing to complain has approached a Support Worker, they must first establish if the complaint or comment is a minor matter which can be rectified simply and without conflict. In such cases, there may be no need to seek a written version of the complaint/comment. This should be discussed and agreed with the person making the complaint/comment. Such cases are most likely to be situations where a person is requesting a service rather than making a complaint.
- In cases where the Support Worker has been approached about a more serious issue that is a complaint and not a request for a service, they must establish whether the person would like assistance in putting their complaint in writing. No pressure should be exerted on them to do this on their own but they can be offered the opportunity to sit down together and record the complaint – the person giving the details and the Support Worker recording these details and reading them back for confirmation before seeking the person's signature that what has been recorded is accurate.

- f. If the Support Worker, within the boundaries of their delegated authority, can resolve the complaint they should attempt to do so. However, if the complaint cannot be resolved like this or the complaint is about staff, the Line Manager must lead on resolving the complaint.
- g. If the complaint is about the line manager, another senior manager or Trustee must lead on resolving the complaint.
- h. Whichever member of staff is trying to resolve the complaint, they should follow these guidelines:
 - Get clear information from the person making the complaint about what went wrong and when. Also ask for their views about how they would like the complaint resolved – i.e. what will fix the problem.
 - Set clear timescales for resolving the complaint and when a response can be made and let the person know these. In general this first stage complaint should be resolved in a maximum of 5 working days. Where this is not possible due to complexities then other timescales should be agreed at the outset.
 - If the complaint is the result of a poor service or mistake by Atal y Fro, this should be rectified immediately and an apology made.
 - If the complaint is considered unjustified by Atal y Fro, this should be put in writing to the person, including the reasons why the complaint was not upheld.
- i. In all cases, the member of staff must reply to the person letting them know the outcome of the complaint. They should be told this in writing but should be given support in discussing and understanding the situation with a member of staff to ensure that they feel an acceptable resolution has been found.

3. IF A COMPLAINT REMAINS UNRESOLVED

- a. If it has not been possible to achieve a resolution to the person's complaint that is satisfactory to both them and Atal y Fro, they should be advised that they can proceed to the next stage of the process if they wish to pursue the matter.
- b. If the initial complaint was made to a Support Worker but remains unresolved, the Line Manager or a Trustee must review it. If the Line Manager or a Trustee have been involved previously, the Trustee Board must review the complaint. The information they will need to consider the person's complaint is:
 - What the complaint is
 - What actions have been taken to resolve the problem
 - Why the person remains dissatisfied
 - What the person would consider a satisfactory resolution to their complaint
- c. Once the Trustee Board has considered the complaint, they must explain to the service user in writing their decision, including reasons. The person should be

offered the same support as described above in discussing and responding to the decision about the complaint. Timescales for this stage should be 28 days for giving a written outcome to the person concerned. If this is not possible then other timescales will be agreed at the outset.

4. COMPLAINTS FROM A SERVICE USER ABOUT ANOTHER SERVICE USER

These should be dealt with using the Anti-Social Behaviour and Dispute Resolution Policy.

5. COMPLAINTS FROM STAFF MEMBERS ABOUT OTHER STAFF MEMBERS

Staff members should use the Grievance Procedure in cases where they have a complaint about the behaviour of either a colleague or the Line Manager.

6. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

The procedure for dealing with complaints and comments from stakeholders will follow the steps set out above, except that these complaints and comments should be addressed to Atal y Fro's Director or the Chair of the Trustee Board in writing.

7. MONITORING COMPLAINTS & COMMENTS AND USING FEEDBACK TO IMPROVE SERVICES

- a. Each time a complaint or comment is made in writing, it should be recorded in the complaints record by the member of staff who receives it and is dealing with it.
- b. The content of this record will be fed into the following systems and processes :
 - Annual business planning, particularly in terms of:
 - Identifying and prioritising changes and improvements to existing services
 - Identifying gaps in service provision
 - Service reviews (timing will be dependent on the cycle of review)
 - Reviews of policies and procedures

Office use only

What stage did the complaint/comment reach? (tick)

Support Worker

Line manager/ Director

Trustee Board

Record any changes which have been made to policies, procedures or working practices as a result of the complaint/comment:

Do any issues need to go forward to service reviews or business planning – if so, state what these are:

Name:

Position:

Date:

APPENDIX 2

RECORD OF COMPLAINTS & COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM MM/YY TO MM/YY AND ACTIONS WHICH HAVE RESULTED	
No. of complaints/comments received in the period	
No. of complaints/comments resolved in the period	
No. of these that were resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant	
Of the complaints/Comments received, how many related to each of the following: Services provided by Atal y Fro: Gaps in services provided by Atal y Fro: A member of Atal y Fro's staff: Other (state):	
The following policies, procedures or working practices have been amended as a result of the complaint/comment (<i>give brief details</i>):	
The following issues have been/will be fed into business planning or service reviews:	