Complaints Policy

Rutland Youth Service

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1.Responsibility for approval of policy	(Board, management committee or senior officer)
2.Responsibility for implementation	Youth Service Manager
3.Responsibility for ensuring review	Youth Service Manager

1 Rutland Youth Service Complaints Policy

1.1 Policy Statement

At Rutland Youth Service, we are committed to addressing any concerns or complaints quickly and fairly. We believe that many issues can be resolved informally through direct communication with the staff involved. However, if a concern remains unresolved or a person is not satisfied with how it was handled, they have the right to escalate the matter through a formal complaints process. This policy outlines the steps for making a complaint.

1.1.1 Stages of the complaint procedure

There are four stages in the Rutland Youth Service complaint process:

- **Stage 1: Informal Resolution with the Staff Member**
- **Stage 2: Discussion with the Line Manager**
- **Stage 3: Formal Written Complaint to the Youth Service manager**
- **Stage 4: Appeal to the Youth Service Manager**
- **Stage 5: Escalation to the Chairperson of the Board of Rutland Youth Service**

1.2 Stage 1: Informal Resolution with the staff member

If you have a concern, we encourage you to first speak directly with the staff member involved. Often, issues can be resolved quickly through direct communication. If the issue involves your child, you may approach the staff member on their behalf.

1.3 Stage 2: Discussion with the line manager

If the concern cannot be resolved directly with the staff member, or if you feel uncomfortable doing so, you can escalate the matter to the staff member's line manager. The line manager will review the situation and work with you to try and resolve the issue.

1.4 Stage 3: Formal Written Complaint

Submitting a Formal Complaint

If the issue is still unresolved, you can submit a formal written complaint. This complaint should include:

- A clear description of the issue.
- The steps you have already taken to resolve it.
- Why you believe the previous response was unsatisfactory.
- What you would like to see happen as a result.

Handling the Formal Complaint

- The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 10 working days of receipt.
- The Youth Service Manager, will investigate the complaint. This may involve speaking with you and any other relevant parties to gather all necessary information.
- The investigation will aim to be completed within 30 working days. If more time is needed, you will be informed of the delay and provided with regular updates.
- The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to you in writing, stating whether the complaint has been upheld and outlining any further actions to be taken.

1.5 Stage 5: Appeal to the youth Service manager

Requesting an appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint process, you can request an appeal. This should be done in writing to the Youth Service Manager of Rutland Youth Service within 30 working days of receiving the outcome.

Handling the Appeal

- The Youth Service Manager will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within 15 working days.
- The appeal will be reviewed, including the process used to handle your complaint and the final decision made.
- The Youth Service Manager will provide a written response within 15 working days of completing the review, explaining whether the original decision has been upheld, modified, or overturned.

1.6 Stage 5: Escalation to the Chairperson of the Board

Requesting Escalation to the Chairperson

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal to the Youth Service Manager, you have the option to escalate your complaint to the Chairperson of the Board of Rutland Youth Service. This step is intended as the final internal review of your complaint within the organisation.

- **How to Escalate:** To escalate your complaint, you must submit a written request to the Chairperson of the Board. This request should include:
  - A summary of the original complaint.
  - The steps taken so far, including previous stages of the complaint process.
  - Reasons why you are dissatisfied with the outcomes at previous stages.
  - Any additional information you believe is relevant to the final review.
- **Submission:** The written request can be sent via email or delivered by post to the contact details provided below.

Handling the Escalation

- **Acknowledgment:** The Chairperson will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 10 working days. This acknowledgment will outline the next steps and expected timelines.

- **Investigation:** The Chairperson will review all previous documentation, decisions, and communications related to your complaint. They may also contact you or other involved parties to gather additional information if needed.
- **Timeline:** The Chairperson will endeavour to complete their review within 30 working days of receiving your escalation. If additional time is required, you will be informed of the delay and provided with regular updates every 20 working days.

Outcome of the Escalation

- **Final Decision:** After reviewing all aspects of your complaint, the Chairperson will make a final decision. This decision may:
    - Uphold the previous decisions made by the Youth Service Manager.
    - Modify the previous decision and propose new actions.
    - Overturn the previous decision and recommend alternative resolutions.
- **Communication:** You will receive a written response from the Chairperson detailing the outcome of the review. This will include a clear explanation of the final decision and any further actions to be taken.

Further Recourse

- **External Escalation:** If you remain dissatisfied after the Chairperson's final decision, you may seek external review. This might involve contacting relevant regulatory bodies or an ombudsman, depending on the nature of the complaint. Guidance on how to proceed with this option will be provided if requested.

Contact Details:
Chairperson of the Board
Rutland Youth Service
21 Summerhill Place, Dublin 1, D01 X086
Email: chairperson@rutlandyouthservice.ie

2 Details for escalating the complaint to a formal written

It's important to put your complaint in writing (or provide a video / voicemail recording) and to include as many details as possible, to make sure we understand you fully. If you'd like, we can get a youth work staff member to help you with that, or with any other part of this process.

Helpful details to include are:

- Your contact details
- Who or what your complaint is about?
- When did this first happen?
- Are there other people who this affects or who have witnessed it?
- Have you told anyone in the youth service about it before now?
- If so, what was their response?
- What would you now like to see happen?

The complaint goes to our Youth Service Manager (unless it involves our RYS Manager, in which case it goes to the Chairperson of the Board of Rutland Youth Service). You can post it, drop it in by hand in a sealed envelope, email, text, etc., once we have it in a format that we can share if needs be.

RYS Manager will contact you to let you know that they've received the complaint, and to let you know what will happen next and by when.

The RYS Manager (or someone acting on their behalf who is also not involved) will investigate the complaint and may contact you or others for more information. An investigation is to get all the relevant facts about the complaint so as to be able to decide on the best response

The RYS Manager will come back, as agreed, to let you know the outcome of the investigation, and any changes that will take places in response to it.

3 Good things to know about your complaint

- If you are under 18, you can still make a complaint, but we will need to let your parents/guardian know.
- If a complaint is made on behalf of a young person, we will confirm with the young person that they are okay with this before proceeding, where possible.
- If the complaint relates to a concern about the welfare of a young person, then it's very important we hear about it, but we will use our Child Safeguarding Policy to deal with it.
- Where a complaint is about a member of staff, we will provide them with a copy of the complaint and give them a right of reply.
- You are still welcome to attend the service during the complaints process.
- We will also keep a record of any meetings with people about the complaint and store all records securely for two years before deleting them.
- A report on all complaints received will be reviewed by Rutland Youth Service every year to make sure everything we do is handled properly.

4 Where to send your complaint

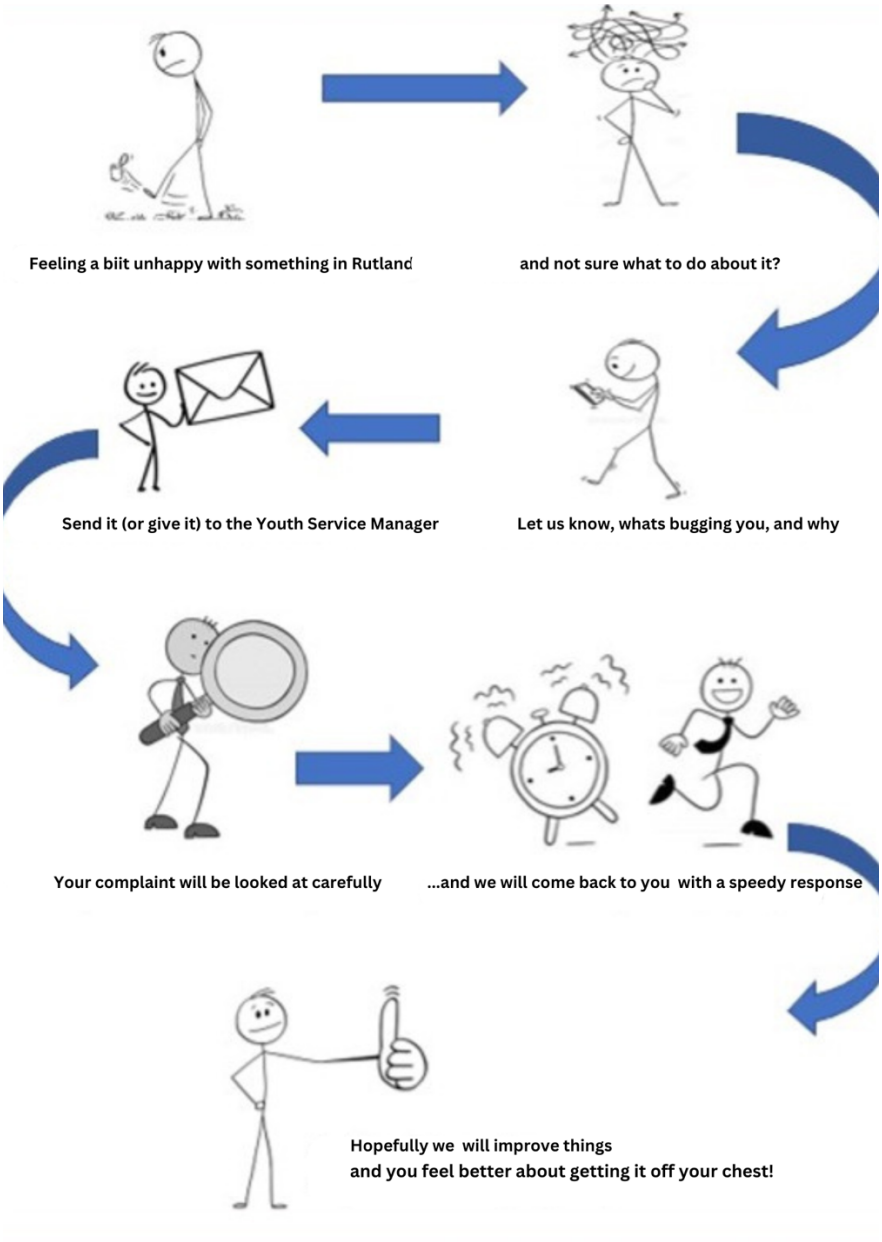
Send your complaint to:

Rutland Youth Service Manager, 21 Summerhill Place, Dublin 1, D01 X086.
Email:Daniel@rutlandyouthservice.ie, PH: 0861989992

5 Important Information

- **Confidentiality**: All complaints will be handled confidentially, with information shared only with those involved in resolving the issue.
- **Support**: If you need help at any stage of this process, a member of the youth service team can assist you.
- **Record Keeping**: All records related to complaints will be kept securely for two years before being deleted.
- **Annual Review**: A report on all complaints received will be reviewed annually to ensure that we continue to improve our services.

5.1 Stages of making a Formal complaint



6 Appendix 1 Complaints procedure for parents

If you have a concern or complaint, here's what you can do:

1. **Talk to the Youth Worker:**
    - Start by talking directly to the youth worker involved. Often, issues can be resolved quickly through a simple conversation.
2. **Speak to the Line Manger (Project Leader):**
    - If you're not satisfied after speaking with the youth worker, or if you prefer, you can discuss the issue with the Project Leader. They will listen to your concerns and work with you to find a solution.
3. **Submit a Formal Complaint:**
    - If the issue still isn't resolved, you can fill out a complaint form. This formal complaint will be reviewed by the Youth Service Manager, who will talk to the team and come up with a solution. The outcome will be shared with you.
4. **Appeal to the Chairperson of the Board:**
    - If you're not happy with the outcome from the Youth Service Manager, you can take your complaint to the Chairperson of the Board. This is the final step within the service to address your complaint.
5. **Confidentiality and Professionalism:**
    - Throughout this process, all staff will handle your complaint professionally and keep all sensitive information confidential.
6. **Complaints About Staff Members:**
    - If your complaint is about a staff member, it will be brought to the attention of their line manager for further action.
7. **Restorative Practice:**
    - We approach all complaints using a restorative practice method, focusing on open communication and finding a positive way forward.

7 Appendix 2 Guideline for Staff and Project Leaders When Receiving and Listening to a Complaint

Handling complaints effectively is crucial to maintaining trust and fostering a positive environment. Here's a guideline for staff and project leaders at Rutland Youth Service when receiving and listening to a complaint:

1. Initial Response: Be Approachable and Professional
    a. Be Open and Attentive: Make sure the person feels heard and respected. Listen actively without interrupting.
    b. Stay Calm and Neutral: Maintain a calm and professional demeanor. Avoid becoming defensive or dismissive.
    c. Acknowledge the Complaint: Thank the person for bringing the issue to your attention and acknowledge their feelings.
2. Listening to the Complaint
    a. Give Your Full Attention: Put aside distractions and focus entirely on the person speaking.
    b. Use Active Listening: Show that you are listening by nodding, maintaining eye contact, and using affirming phrases like "I understand" or "I see."
    c. Clarify Details: Ask open-ended questions to gather more information if needed (e.g., "Can you tell me more about what happened?").
    d. Summarise What You Heard: Briefly repeat back what you've heard to ensure you've understood the key points (e.g., "So, what I'm hearing is...").
3. Responding to the Complaint
    a. Empathise: Show understanding and empathy for the person's feelings (e.g., "I can see why this would be upsetting for you").
    b. Explain Next Steps: Outline the steps that will be taken to address the complaint. Be clear about the process and timelines.
    c. Keep Confidentiality: Assure the complainant that the issue will be handled confidentially and that information will only be shared with those involved in resolving the issue.
    d. Offer Support: Let them know that support is available if they need it, and offer to assist them through the complaint process.
4. Escalating the Complaint
    a. Know When to Escalate: If the complaint cannot be resolved at your level, inform the person about the next steps and who will handle the matter from there.Follow Policy: Ensure that any escalation follows the formal complaints procedure outlined by the Rutland Youth Service.
5. Documenting the Complaint
    a. Take Notes: Record the details of the complaint accurately, including the date, time, and key points discussed.
    b. Submit Documentation: If necessary, forward the documented complaint to the appropriate person, such as the Youth Service Manager or Line Manager, in accordance with the policy.
6. After the Complaint
    a. Follow Up: If appropriate, check in with the person who made the complaint to ensure they feel their issue is being addressed.
    b. Reflect and Learn: Use the experience as a learning opportunity to improve future interactions and services.

7.1 For Project Leaders

In addition to the above steps, project leaders should also:

- Support Staff: Provide guidance and support to staff members who are handling complaints, ensuring they are following procedures correctly.
- Oversee the Process: Monitor the progress of complaints to ensure they are being handled efficiently and according to policy.
- Ensure Fairness: Ensure that all parties involved are treated fairly and that the process remains transparent and unbiased.
- Report and Review: Keep records of all complaints and resolutions. Regularly review them to identify any patterns or areas for improvement in service delivery.
- By following this guideline, staff and project leaders can ensure that complaints are handled in a way that is respectful, effective, and aligned with Rutland Youth Service's commitment to addressing concerns fairly and transparently.

7.2 Appendix 3 Restorative Practice Guidelines

Here are restorative practice questions tailored for staff to use when handling complaints or conflicts. These questions are designed to facilitate open dialogue, encourage reflection, and support a constructive resolution:

For the Person Who Caused Harm (e.g., Staff, Youth, or Others):

1. **What happened?**
    - "Can you describe what happened from your point of view?"
2. **What were you thinking at the time?**
    - "What was going through your mind when this occurred?"
3. **What have you thought about since?**
    - "How do you feel about the situation now that you've had some time to reflect?"
4. **Who has been affected by what you did, and how?**
    - "Who do you think has been impacted by this, and in what way?"
5. **What do you think you need to do to make things right?**
    - "What steps do you believe you should take to address the situation and make amends?"

For the Person Who Was Harmed (e.g., Staff, Youth, or Others):

1. **What did you think when you realized what had happened?**
    - "How did you feel when you first became aware of what happened?"
2. **How has this affected you?**
    - "Can you share how this situation has impacted you personally?"
3. **What has been the hardest thing for you?**
    - "What has been the most challenging part of this experience for you?"
4. **What do you think needs to happen to make things right?**
    - "In your opinion, what needs to be done to resolve this situation?"

For Everyone Involved (e.g., During Group Discussions or Mediation):

1. **What happened from your perspective?**
    - "Let's hear what happened from each of your perspectives. What do you think led to this situation?"
2. **What impact has this had on you and others?**
    - "How do you think this has affected you and the people around you?"
3. **What do you think needs to happen to resolve this situation?**
    - "What do you believe needs to happen now to address the situation and move forward?"
4. **How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?**
    - "What can we do together to prevent something like this from happening in the future?"

Additional Reflective Questions for Staff:

1. **What could have been done differently?**
    - "Looking back, what could have been done differently to avoid this situation?"
2. **How can we improve communication to avoid similar issues?**
    - "How can we improve our communication or practices to prevent similar problems in the future?"
3. **What support do you need moving forward?**
    - "What support do you need from the team or management to help move forward positively?"

8 Appendix 4 Complaints form

Rutland Youth Service Complaint Form for Parents/Young people

Your Contact Information:

- **Name:** _____
- **Address:** _____
- **Phone Number:** _____
- **Email Address:** _____

Details of the Complaint:

1. **Who or What is Your Complaint About?**
   - Please provide the name(s) of the individual(s) or the specific issue you are concerned about:
   - _____
2. **When Did the Incident Occur?**
   - Date and time (if applicable):
   - _____
3. **Where Did the Incident Happen?**
   - Location or setting where the incident occurred:
   - _____
4. **Description of the Complaint:**
   - Please describe the issue in detail. Include what happened, how it has affected you or your child, and any relevant background information:
   - _____
   - _____
   - _____
5. **Steps You Have Already Taken:**
   - Have you already discussed this issue with a staff member? If so, who did you speak with and what was the outcome?
   - _____
   - _____
6. **Who Else Was Involved or Affected?**
   - Please list any other individuals who were involved in or witnessed the incident:
   - _____
7. **Desired Outcome:**
   - What would you like to see happen as a result of this complaint?
   - _____
   - _____

Additional Information:

8. **Supporting Documents:**
   - If you have any documents, emails, or other evidence that support your complaint, please list them here or attach them to this form:
   - _____
9. **Other Relevant Information:**
   - Is there anything else you think we should know?
   - _____
   - _____

Confidentiality:

- Please note that your complaint will be handled confidentially. Information will only be shared with those involved in resolving the issue.

Signature:

- **Parent/Guardian Signature:** _____
- **Date:** _____

8.1.1 Submission Instructions:

You can submit this form in any of the following ways:

- **Email:** Daniel@rutlandyouthservice.ie
- **Mail:** Rutland Youth Service, 21 Summerhill Place, Dublin 1, D01 X086
- **In Person:** Drop off at our office in a sealed envelope.
- **Phone:** Call us at 0861989992 to arrange another way to submit.

8.1.2 For Office Use Only:

- **Date Received:** _____
- **Received By:** _____
- **Complaint Reference Number:** _____

9 Appendix 5 QR for making a complaint online

