Representations and complaints policy and procedure

Procedure Overview

We encourage staff to be receptive and sensitive to any complaints about our services, as they help us improve and monitor the quality of what we provide. All complaints will follow this Representations and Complaints Procedure.

Purpose/Objectives

We view complaints positively, as a tool to:

1. Ensure the procedure is clear and easy to use.
2. Treat all service users with dignity and respect, making them feel safe to raise concerns.
3. Handle complaints fairly and consistently.
4. Refer any child protection concerns immediately to the relevant Social Services Team or Police.
5. Resolve complaints quickly and satisfactorily whenever possible.
6. Ensure everyone involved has a fair process and adequate support.
7. Provide a full response without unnecessary delay.
8. Inform complainants about other avenues for redress, including regulatory bodies or ombudsman services.
9. Use complaints to monitor performance, learn lessons, and improve services.

(Taken from: Getting the Best from Complaints 2006)

All complaints will be treated confidentially, with information shared only as necessary for investigation and resolution.

Scope

Complaints and representations may concern:

- Any person working on behalf of the organisation.
- Services provided or reasonably expected.
- Failure to provide services appropriately.

This procedure is open to:

- Self-employed advocates, independent visitors, trainers, and consultants.
- Service users, family members, or someone acting on behalf of a child.
- Commissioners or anyone for whom we provide a service.

Note: Staff should use the grievance procedure, not this complaints procedure.

Procedure Details

Interaction with other procedures

- Complaints suggesting a child may be at risk will follow **Child Protection / Allegations procedures**.
- This procedure does not replace child protection, grievance, disciplinary procedures, or court proceedings.
- If another procedure affects the handling of a complaint, the complaint may be paused until the other procedure concludes. Complainants will be informed in writing and may resubmit within one year.

Definitions and Abbreviations

- **Complaint:** Any written or oral expression of dissatisfaction about the quality, delivery, or non-delivery of services, decision-making delays, or disputed decisions.
- **Representation:** A formal statement to communicate an opinion or register a protest.

Both **Representations** and **Complaints** are dealt with in the same manner in this procedure and the terms are used interchangeably. The term 'representation' may be more acceptable to some people than the term 'complaint.'

Time Limit

- Complaints must usually be made within one year of the event or 3 months after the completion of engagement.
- Late complaints may be accepted at the organisation's discretion. Factors considered:
- Reasonableness of the delay.
- Whether a fair investigation is still possible.
- Complainants will receive a written explanation of any decision.

Who may make a representation or complaint under this procedure?

- Customers (Local Authority, private organisations, charities)
- Associates (trainers, advocates, consultants, assessors)
- Volunteers
- Family members impacted by the service
- Anyone for whom we have agreed to provide a service

How to Complain

A copy of our procedure is provided to all customers contracted with them at the initial contract set up meeting. Those that work with us on a spot purchase basis are provided with the policy and procedure upon request.

- Complaints can be sent by:
    - **Email:** info@reconstruct.co.uk
    - **Phone (optional):** 0800 0209 858

Your complaint

You should outline your complaint, providing as many factual details as possible, and let us know what outcome you are hoping for. When we receive your complaint, we will:

- Acknowledge your concern **within 5 working days**. You will be told who will handle your complaint. Usually, this will be the relevant Line Manager, but this may vary depending on the nature of your complaint. You have the right to request a different officer to investigate.
- Ask how you would like us to communicate with you.
- Deal with your concern in an **objective, open, and honest way**.
- If necessary, set out our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we've got it right.
- Clarify what outcome you are hoping for.

The person dealing with your complaint will offer to meet with you. You may have a friend, family member, or union representative accompany you to the meeting.

We will look at all relevant evidence, which may include files, notes of conversations, letters, and emails. We will also speak to staff or others involved and review our policies, legal entitlements, and guidance.

We aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to respond in writing **within 20 working days**. For more complex complaints, we will:

- Explain why it may take longer;
- Give an expected timescale for completion;
- Keep you updated on progress.

You will be offered an interview to explore the most appropriate ways to resolve the issue. This should normally be done **within 28 days**, unless a different timescale is agreed with you. We will always ensure you agree with the proposed resolution approach.

Where the complaint is made by a service user, a record of the complaint and its outcome will remain in the service user's file. We will ensure that the Local Authority commissioning the service is informed of the complaint and its outcome.

Allegations

All allegations from children, carers, professionals, or staff must be reported in line with the **Allegations Policy**.

Complaints about the Managing Director

Regarding complaints that are specifically about the Managing Director, these can be sent to the info@reconstruct.co.uk and will be allocated accordingly to the relevant person to investigate.

Process

We have a two-stage process for dealing with complaints:

- Stage One Formal written response completed by the relevant Line Manager
- Stage Two Formal written response completed by the Managing Director or Service Manager

Stage One

- Acknowledge receipt within 5 working days.
- Confirm who will handle the complaint (usually the relevant Line Manager). Complainants can request a different officer if needed.
- Investigate the complaint: review files, speak with staff involved, and consider all evidence.
- Provide a detailed written response, including proposed resolution, within 20 working days.
- For safeguarding matters, Safeguarding procedures take precedence.

Stage Two

- If dissatisfied, the complainant can request a review by the Managing Director within 7 working days of receiving Stage One outcome, providing reasons for dissatisfaction.
- The Managing Director reviews all relevant information and the Stage One response.
- A formal response will be provided within 20 working days of receiving the review request.
- If the complaint concerns the Managing Director, it can be escalated to the HR team.
- This is the final internal stage.

Escalation Beyond the Organisation

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome after Stage Two, they should contact:

- The **HR Team** (leanne.parker@hrdept.co.uk) for a review – they are an external HR company.

Complainants should be reassured that we will cooperate fully with any external review or investigation

Conclusion

We want all our stakeholders to be happy with what we do and how we treat them so we welcome concerns and will strive to prevent them becoming formal complaints. However, we will also take all complaints seriously and will always respond in a timely, clear and sensitive manner.

We will feed all concerns and complaints into our Quality Assurance Framework to make sure staff at all levels are aware of the learning and any actions needed. Any training issues identified will also be addressed.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed triennially unless there are legal, regulatory or business reasons for earlier updates. The service's Senior Management Team will be responsible for the monitoring and reviewing of this policy and the table below will be updated to show a clear evidence trail of when and why policies have been reviewed. It should be noted when a policy has been reviewed and no changes are required.

VERSION CONTROL

			Document Owner	Reconstruct Ltd
			Status	Active
			Next Review	1/2/2029
Version	Revision Date	Section Revised	Person undertaking Revision	Reason for Revision
V_2	10/10/23	All	AD	Review of policy, rebranding, and implemented version control mechanism opposed to having just date for next review
V_3	1/2/2026	Contact details	LM	Amended HR email address.