

# Gaddum

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## **Complaints, Compliments, Comments and Concerns Policy**

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### **Introduction**

Gaddum aims to provide a high-quality person-centred service. In order to ensure this, we need to take into account the views of those we are here to support. We welcome our service users' views and will use them to improve our services.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for dealing with complaints, compliments and comments. It explains our processes and our obligations to our service users.

### **Aims**

Gaddum aims to provide excellent people-centred services, but occasionally things go wrong. Complaints help us to put things right and make sure the same mistake does not happen again.

Our complaints policy aims to ensure service users:

- Know where and how to complain;
- Receive an acknowledgement and information on the progress of their complaint; and
- Receive an appropriate response with prompt and adequate action when we have failed to provide a satisfactory service.

We aim to respond to service users' feedback in a consistent and professional manner, and use complaints to shape our services by providing regular reports about the complaints we receive.

**Gaddum's definition of a complaint, a compliment, a comment and concerns.**

<b>A complaint is...</b>	...an expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken by Gaddum or a person acting on behalf of Gaddum.
<b>A comment is...</b>	...a personal opinion or belief, feedback or remark expressed by a service user. Where the service user indicates they expect a reply, or where it is otherwise
	thought appropriate to do so, this should be dealt with as general correspondence.
<b>A compliment is...</b>	...defined as a service user statement of positive recognition or praise for a service or individual.
<b>A concern is...</b>	...defined as when someone wants to raise an issue regarding a service but does not wish to make a formal complaint.

### **Complementing our service**

Compliments are valuable, welcome and important and when they are received in writing, they will be recorded. Compliments enable Gaddum:

- Understand that our service is being provided to the service users' satisfaction
- Provide positive feedback to our staff and volunteers
- Influence our development as an organisation and as a service

### **Gaddum's complaints procedure**

#### **Making a complaint**

Service users' can make a complaint in the following ways:

- Via our website; [www.gaddum.org.uk](http://www.gaddum.org.uk); or
- Complaints form
- Emailing: [complaints@gaddum.org.uk](mailto:complaints@gaddum.org.uk)

The complaints will be received by the project manager of the service the complaint has been made about. The project manager will then compose a reply which will be signed off by their service manager. All complaints will be registered in a log, with any additional action to be taken.

All complaints will be logged as a stage 1 complaint initially.

#### **Stage 1 complaints**

Stage 1 complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days, this will include an explanation of the complaints process and the timescale for dealing with the complaint.

Stage 1 complaints will be investigated by the project manager and agreed by their service manager. Where the complaint names a member of staff they will be informed of the complaint and given the opportunity to comment, but will not be

responsible for providing the response to the complainant. Where necessary the project manager of another service may investigate.

Stage 1 complaints will be investigated and a response will be sent to the complainant within 20 working days. Where an email address has been provided a response will be sent by email unless a paper copy has been requested. Letters will be posted within 20 working days, although delivery dates may be later.

Occasionally it may not be possible to conclude an investigation and respond within 20 working days. In these circumstances the project manager will inform the complainant of the reasons for the delay and the expected response date.

Performance against the 20-working day target will be reported on a regular basis.

### **Stage 2 complaints**

If a service user is not satisfied that all aspects of their complaint have been addressed and wishes to escalate it, the service user must inform the complaints team within 25 working days of receiving the response, stating what aspects of the response they are dissatisfied with and their desired outcome.

Reasonable constraints to meeting this time limit, illness for example, will be taken into account. The service user should provide any additional or further information that may affect the outcome or response.

Stage 2 of the complaints process may be instigated at the request of a complaint or the service manager. A stage 2 investigation reviews the investigation and outcome of a stage 1 complaint.

A stage 2 investigation may also look at any similar complaints about a particular service issue to identify potential improvements to the service and Gaddum.

Stage 2 investigations will be conducted by the service manager. Stage 2 responses will be agreed with the Chief Executive of Gaddum.

Stage 2 investigations will usually be completed within 25 working days. Occasionally it may not be possible to conclude an investigation and respond within 25 working days. In these circumstances the service manager will inform the complainant of the reasons for the delay and the expected response date.

Performance against the 25 working day target will be reported on a regular basis. A log of stage 2 recommendations will be maintained by the service manager who will report to the Chief Executive on their implementation.

### **The Charity Commission**

In the event that a service user is still not satisfied that we have resolved their complaint after proceeding through the complaints procedure, they can complain to The Charity Commission. The Charity Commission regulates charities in England and Wales, to ensure that the public can support charities with confidence.

The Charity Commission's website [www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity) has the relevant forms and numbers to contact.

### **Equalities issues in making a compliant**

We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that service users with particular needs such as physical or sensory impairment, learning disabilities and service users who are less familiar with English have full access to the complaints process.

### **Making a complaint on the behalf of someone else**

For reasons of service user confidentiality, Gaddum will only accept complaints from a representative under certain conditions.

Either:

- Where Gaddum is sure that the service user has consented, either verbally or in writing
- Where the complaint is made on the behalf of a child by their parent or guardian

Or:

- Where the service user cannot complain unaided and cannot give consent because they lack capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005

And

- The representative is acting in the service users' best interests.

### **Confidentiality**

Gaddum respects the privacy of information supplied through the complaints process, and we use it to improve our services and resolve complaints. If a formal complaint is made against a member of staff, they will be given the opportunity to comment.

Anonymous complaints will be considered under the complaints policy and any anonymous complaint or comment that relates to vulnerable people or those who might be at risk will be investigated and acted upon immediately.

However, in some circumstances it may not be possible to investigate an anonymous complaint. If a service user has concerns about giving their name, they can speak to a project/service manager who can answer any questions about how the complaint will be handled.

### **Complaints Performance – Monitoring and Reporting**

#### **Information to be recorded**

The project manager/service manager will record the following information with regard to complaints:

- The number of complaints
- The issues complained about
- Whether complaint involves discrimination or harassment
- The name and correspondence address of the service user, unless they wish to remain anonymous
- The service which received the complaint
- The length of time taken to respond to the complaint
- Whether the complaint was upheld

This information is to be monitored and reported on a bi-monthly basis. An annual report will be completed analysing all the data from that year.

### **Concerns**

If someone has a concern regarding a service/service provision but does not want to make a complaint, then they should in the first instance raise this with the Project Manager. This information will then be shared with the Service Manager for that area.

The concern will be acknowledged and responded to in the same timeframe as a complaint and there will be a response to the issue raised addressing the concern and stating any follow up from it (if applicable).