COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND GUIDANCE

POLICY STATEMENT

The Carers’ Support Centre (CSC) aims to provide a high-quality, responsive, carer-led service. In order to ensure this we need to take account of the views and wishes of those we are here to support. We welcome every opportunity to monitor and improve our service and having a “complaints and compliments” policy and a clear procedure for resolving complaints is one way of doing this.

Complimenting Our Service

Compliments are valuable, welcome and important and when they are received, either verbally or in writing, they will be recorded. Compliments enable the CSC to:

- understand that our service is being provided to the carers’ satisfaction
- provide positive feedback to our staff
- influence our organisational and service development
- inform our quality assurance programme

Complaining About Our Service

The CSC recognises that there will be times when our trustees, staff and volunteers make mistakes, or get things wrong. In order to learn from such mistakes we need to know about them and encourage people to comment or complain. Such comments or complaints will always be taken seriously, recorded and responded to as detailed in the procedure for resolving complaints which accompanies this policy statement.

PROCEDURE FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

Who Can Use This Procedure?

This procedure is for anyone who comes into contact with trustees, staff and volunteers from the CSC. By anyone we mean service users – carers, practitioners, people with care needs, other voluntary groups, statutory agencies and any other member of the public.

You may have the assistance of a friend or someone else to help you with any or all of the stages of this complaints procedure. If you wish to follow this procedure and complain about an aspect of our service, this will NOT affect any services you receive, or wish to receive, from the CSC.
The Procedure

Stage 1

1.1 We hope that the majority of complaints can be resolved informally by speaking directly to the person or persons involved. This can be done either by telephone or in a face to face meeting. All complaints will be recorded at this stage on our feedback form. If the complaint is resolved at this stage you will receive a letter outlining the issue and the decisions reached and agreed. If, however, informal resolution is not possible Stage 2 and 3 are available to support complainants.

If it has not been possible to resolve your complaint at Stage 1 you should move to Stage 2.

Stage 2

2.1 If your complaint relates to the governance of the CSC by the Board of Trustees you should write to the Company Secretary, at the CSC, The Vassall Centre, Gill Ave, Bristol BS16 2QQ.

2.2 If your complaint relates to an operational policy you should write to the Chief Executive, at the address above.

2.3 If your complaint is about a member of the CSC staff or a volunteer you should write to their line manager. If you are not sure of who that is contact the main office on 0117 939 2562 and speak to the Resources Officer who will give you that information. This request will be treated in confidence.

2.4 If your complaint is about a member of the CSC Board of Trustees or the Chief Executive you must write to The Chair of the Board who has been designated to handle complaints at this level. If the complaint involves The Chair, you should write to the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees at the address above.

2.5 In 2.1-2.4 above your letter will be acknowledged by the addressee within 3 working days of the date of receipt. If the addressee is on holiday or sick leave he or she will have ensured that arrangements are in place for complaints to be acknowledged. The Complaint will be recorded on our formal complaint log.

Once the complaint has been acknowledged it will be fully investigated, by discussion with all individuals involved and a written response provided within 20 working days. If
this timeframe is delayed because of holiday or sick leave you will be informed when your complaint is acknowledged.

2.6 If you are not satisfied by the response at Stage 2 you should move to Stage 3.

Stage 3

At all times during this stage, you will be informed of the name of the person you should contact at the CSC

3.1 If your complaint has related to the governance of the CSC by the Board of Trustees of you should write to the Chair of Trustees, The CSC, The Vassall Centre, Gill Ave, Bristol BS16 2QQ.

3.2 If your complaint has related to an operational policy you should write to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the address above.

3.3 If your complaint has been about a member of the CSC staff or a volunteer your complaint will be heard by the Chief Executive. If the complaint is about the Chief Executive you should write the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the address above.

3.4 If your complaint has been about a member of the Board of Trustees or the Chief Executive your complaint will be heard by a small panel of 3 members of the Board (not including the designated trustee identified in 3.1-3.3 above). You should write to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the address above. The Chairman of the Board will appoint the panel members and the panel will normally meet within 20 working days of your request.

You will be notified in writing about the time and place of the meeting at least 10 days beforehand so that you may attend if you wish. A representative may accompany you. The Review Panel will let you know its decisions and the reasons for those decisions in writing within 7 days.

3.5 In 3.1- 3.4 above your letter will be acknowledged by the addressee within 3 working days of the date of the receipt. If the addressee is on holiday or sick leave he or she will have ensured arrangements are in place for complaints to be acknowledged.

In 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 once the complaint has been acknowledged it will be investigated, by discussion with all involved and a written response provided within 20 working days. If this timeframe is delayed because of holiday or sick leave you will be informed when your complaint is acknowledged.
This is the final stage in the complaints and compliments procedure, but this does not affect your right to contact Bristol Health and Social Care or South Glos Community Care and Housing if the complaint is about a service funded by these authorities.

You can also contact your local MP, any other authorities who fund the CSC, or the Charity Commission.

**Guidance Notes for Carers Centre Staff and Personnel**

All line-managers and the designated Trustee from the Board will maintain a record of complaints and compliments and these will be reviewed on a regular basis. The Board will receive information at their meetings on the number of complaints and compliments received in a quarter and information about complaints will be available to the public for inspection.

Specific details which may identify individuals, be they complainant or staff, will be kept strictly confidential.