

<b>Down Syndrome Centre Policy Document</b>	<b>Title: Complaints Handling Policy</b>
	<b>Effective Date: November 2020</b>



### **Document Control**

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## **Section 1:**

### **Declaration of Guiding Principals**

#### **Our Mission Statement:**

To create a centre dedicated to providing support and services to families and carers of people with Down syndrome; helping them to reach their full potential and creating a brighter future.

#### **Our Vision:**

That every individual with Down syndrome has the opportunity to live full and independent lives.

#### **Our Ethos:**

The ethos of the centre focuses around 'Positivity' providing a warm, friendly and welcoming space where we concentrate on the abilities of a child and not their disabilities and where each and every milestone is celebrated no matter how small by both parents and staff alike. We try to create a 'home from home' environment where we focus on the family unit and not just the child.

#### **Services Provided:**

The Downs Syndrome Centre provides the following service to children and young adults with Down Syndrome:

- Speech & Language Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Baby Massage
- SKIP (Special Kids Intervention Programme)
- Team 21 Tots
- Children Workshops
- Parent Support
- Youth Club

The Down Syndrome Centre is committed to ensuring that all our communications and dealing with the public, service users and supporters are of the highest possible standard. We endeavour to listen and respond to all the views of all our stakeholders, whether positive or negative, in order for our Service to continue improving.

We are committed to resolving any complaint in a timely manner while also ensuring that we are being consistent, fair and impartial in handling the complaint.

This Policy has been implemented to provide guidance regarding how the Down Syndrome Centre receives and manages all complaints.

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## **Section 2:**

### **Aim of Complaints Handling Policy**

It is the aim of the Down Syndrome Centre to ensure the following:

- The process of submitting a complaint is easy
- Stakeholders are aware of our complaint lodgement and handling process
- Stakeholders and Down Syndrome Centre staff members and Trustees understand our complaints procedure
- We are committed to responding to all complaints accordingly
- The Down Syndrome Centres believes in learning from any complaints submitted, using them to improve our services offered.

The Down Syndrome Centre will ensure complaints will be:

- Treated seriously and respectfully whether submitted by telephone, letter, email or in person
- Investigated impartially with a balanced assessment of all the information and evidence supplied
- Dealt with in efficiently and timely manner

## **Section 3:**

### **Definition of a Complaint:**

In this policy, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction relating to any aspect of our services by our stakeholders including but not limited to service users, their families, supporters, and members of the public.

## **Section 4:**

### **How to Submit a Complaint:**

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with any aspect of the services provided by the Down Syndrome Centre, we encourage them to initially speak directly with the staff member they have been dealing with. If they are uncomfortable doing this or feel the staff member is unable to address their concerns, they can formally lodge a complaint by the following means:

- By telephone the Down Syndrome Centre at 01
- By emailing [info@downsyndromecentre.ie](mailto:info@downsyndromecentre.ie)
- By writing to Sharon Dagg, CEO, Down Syndrome Centre, Shewsbury House, Old Bray Road, Cabinteely, Dublin 18
- In person by visiting the centre.

Please be advised that anonymous complaints will not be investigated as there is always a possibility that they are vexatious or malicious and the anonymity of the Complainant does not enable the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness to be

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upheld. In addition, any anonymous complaint(s) received in relation to a member of staff of the Down Syndrome Centre will not be investigated as it is contrary to the rights of the employee.

## **Section 5**

### **Supporting Information required when Submitting a Complaint:**

In order for the Down Syndrome Centre to investigate a complaint fairly and efficiently, we rely on all the information submitted surrounding the complaint. However, should there be any ambiguity or necessity for additional information we may need to contact the complainant to clarify or provide additional information. In this regard, when submitting a complaint, we request that the following information is included:

- Name and contact details of complainant
- The nature of the complaint being submitted
- Details of any steps that have undertaken to resolve the issue
- Copies of any documents that may support the complaint
- Details of any correspondence or conversations the complainant may have previously had with members of the Down Syndrome Centre's staff regarding the complaint.

## **Section 6**

### **Recording & Storing Complaints:**

When managing a complaint, the Down Syndrome Centre will record complainant's name, contact details and all the details and information regarding the complaint. We will also record the outcome of our investigation and any follow up actions undertaken. Please refer to the Down Syndrome Centre's Data Protection Policy for additional information relating to recording and storing of personal data.

The Down Syndrome Centre's CEO and Trustees are committed to reviewing all complaints received and subsequent outcomes to ensure any amendments required to improve or enhance our services are implemented accordingly.

## **Section 7**

### **Feedback**

The Down Syndrome Centre endeavours to resolve all issues and complaints in the initial point of contact. However, this may not always be possible, resulting in our formal complaints procedure being initiated. In this regard the Down Syndrome Centre adheres the following procedure:

- Within 7 business days of receiving the complaint, we will formally acknowledge receipt of the complaint
- Initial investigation of the complaint will commence

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- If required, the complainant may be contacted to clarify or provide additional information
- Upon completion of investigating the complaint, we will inform the complainant of our findings and any actions we have take to address the issue. This will be initially done verbally, followed up in writing.
- The complainant has the right to make enquiries about the status of their complaint at any time during the process.

## **Section 8**

### **Complaint against Down Syndrome Centre Employee or Volunteer**

Should the complaint be against a Down Syndrome Centre member of staff or volunteer, it is our aim to treat the complaint confidentially, impartially and by giving fair and equal treatment to all involved.

We are committed to investigating the complaint comprehensively by determining the relevant facts, liaising with all parties involved and substantiating all information and explanations provided.

The Down Syndrome Centre believes in treating staff members and volunteers objectively while adhering to the Centre's Staff Manual Policy and Volunteer Policy. In this regard, we will:

- Inform them of any complaint submitted in relation to their performance
- Provide them with an opportunity to give their side
- Offer appropriate support if required
- Keep them abreast of the investigation and subsequent outcome.

## **Section 9**

### **Complaints Escalation Process**

Should the complainant be unhappy the outcome or our response to the complaint, they may write to the Chairperson of Trustees, Down Syndrome Centre, Shewsbury House, Old Bray Road, Cabinteerly, Dublin 18. The Chairperson will ensure that the appeal is reviewed and considered at Board level and will respond in writing within 4 weeks of the Board's decision and any recommendations.