



1. Purpose

Acacia wants to ensure that we are an exemplary organisation, effectively demonstrating the willingness to learn from omissions and mistakes in an open and honest manner. At the same time, we need to recognise areas of work in which we excel so that this information can inform our service development and provide encouragement to our staff and volunteers.

At Acacia, we are committed to providing a quality service and a supportive environment at all times. This means we need to constantly look for ways of improving how we work. Our mums, dads, staff, volunteers and other agencies we work with are all very important to us so we welcome their views to help us maintain and improve our service.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Acacia Trustees, staff, volunteers, its partners and members.

3. Policy

Acacia Family Support is the only organisation in Birmingham to offer a comprehensive menu of perinatal depression services in the heart of local communities. We aim to offer hope, healing and reassurance for mothers or partners affected by this debilitating illness and we strive to always offer the very best service. Therefore, we welcome feedback on all aspects of our work. To make this process as simple as possible we provide a compliments/complaints form. This should be available at all of our sites and can also be downloaded from the Quality Management System on Sharepoint (FQ063 Compliments and Complaints).

We encourage clients, staff, volunteers and other agencies and services to use this form to let us know how we are doing and raise any significant issues and concerns regarding Acacia services and staff/volunteers.

Compliments

Compliments let us know what we're doing well and help to identify areas of good practice. Comments are also passed on to the staff/volunteers concerned as an encouragement.

Comments/Suggestions

Suggestions help us to develop our services, so welcome any thoughts about how we can improve things.

Complaints

If someone is not happy about any aspect of our services, or the way they have been dealt with by our staff, it is important that we know so that we have the opportunity to put things right and, if necessary, make changes to our decisions and/or the way we work. If we receive repeated complaints about the same subject we are alerted to significant problems. Complaints and feedback help make us aware of problems that we don't know about and are therefore vitally important.



Complaints/Compliments Process

Compliments, suggestions and any other comments can be made over the phone or by email: Phone: 0121 301 5990, email: teamacacia@acacia.org.uk, or by completing the form (FQ009).

If anyone approaches/contacts a member staff or a volunteer to raise a concern about any aspect of Acacia's work, they should be guided to an appropriate person to discuss the matter, maybe a Locality Manager or someone in the relevant head office department, or another Acacia employee can help. Many issues are resolved in this way, but if the complainant is still not happy, and would like to make a formal complaint, explain that this will need to be in writing.

In cases where the complainant just wants to discuss the matter and take it no further, an incident form (FQ002 Incident Report) should be completed by the staff member or volunteer to ensure that the information is processed through our quality and risk management processes.

Formal complaints must be made in writing, ideally by using our complaints form (FQ009). If the complainant has difficulty filling in forms, someone else can complete the feedback form on their behalf. This can be done by family, friend, Acacia staff/volunteer or other. However, the complainant, must sign it. If a staff member or volunteer is receiving the completed form please check that the complainant has completed all relevant contact details and indicated on the form whether they wish to receive a response from us.

If the complaint is that there is a previous unresolved complaint, this needs to be elevated immediately to the Operation Director.

Trainee Complaints and Appeals

Appeals and complaints regarding Acacia training/assessments should in the first instance be discussed with the Volunteer Co-ordinator (VC) to see if they can be quickly and easily resolved. If no resolution can be found the trainee should follow our standard written complaints procedure. Where the appeal/complaint is resolved informally the Volunteer Co-ordinator should complete an incident form describing the event and outcome and forward to the Operations Director. This evidence will contribute to the annual quality appraisal of our internal training programs and help identify any patterns and/or ongoing issues.

How we deal with complaints

All general complaints are forwarded to the Operations Director as per below.

- Where the complainant does not want to make a formal complaint, the incident form containing the informal complaint details is dealt with by the appropriate Locality Manager, Volunteer Co-ordinator or other supervisor and then passed on to the Operations Director.
- In the case of a written formal complaint it is passed to the Operations Director as soon as possible within 48 hours and taking into consideration the seriousness of the complaint. If there is any significant risk in relation to the complaint the Operations Director must be informed immediately.



- In the case of a complaint and/or an appeal by a trainee regarding their training result/assessment. This will be dealt with by the Volunteer Co-ordinator in the first instance following our general complaints guidelines. If the trainee is not satisfied with the outcome they may ask for it to be elevated to the Operations Director for further investigation.

We will respond promptly and sensitively. We will treat complaints in confidence and respect the complainant's privacy.

The Operations Director will contact the complainant as soon as possible and if a response has been requested, will aim to acknowledge the complaint in writing within 3 days.

We aim to address concerns as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, the Operations Director and his delegates will investigate the complaint to understand what happened and why, and to find ways to prevent it from happening again.

If the complainant has requested a response, we will keep the complainant informed about the progress of the complaint along the way.

We will provide a full written response to any written complaint sent to us, within 20 working days of receiving it.

If it is not possible to give a full reply within this time, we will send the complainant an email and/or a letter explaining the delay and letting them know when to expect a full response.

We hope to resolve concerns at this stage. However, if the complainant is not satisfied with our response, they have the option to ask for a review and a further response by one of our Trustees.

Resolution

We will work with the complainant to assess how best to resolve the complaint. We will do this by establishing the outcome they would like and if appropriate, striving to provide it. If this is not possible a full explanation will be provided.

Improving our service

Compliments and complaints help improve our service. They are important elements to our quality and risk management process. They are dealt with by the Operations Director and are an agenda item in our Operational Management Team meetings. This provides a mechanism to ensure that they are dealt with effectively, that lessons are learnt and that appropriate, timely and responsive actions are taken. We try hard to work together to find ways to improve our service and to respond to feedback in a positive way. This helps us to deliver a better service for everyone