

Policy: Customer Service Charter  
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## **Customer Complaints Policy**

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# **1. Customer Complaints Policy**

## **1.1 Purpose**

The Crann Centre Customer Complaints Policy sets out the standard and behaviour that should reinforce our interactions with our stakeholders and in particular our service users. The policy lays out the different methods you can use to contact us and the procedure to use for complaints. Our core values underpin our delivery of services. These are:

- Promoting the social model of disability which recognises the structural barriers that prevent people with a disability from accessing services.
- Supporting a rights-based approach to accessing services – recognising people with disabilities as active citizens who should claim their rights and to make informed decisions.
- Recognising a family-led approach – the whole family's well-being should be supported.
- A collaborative care approach between individuals, families and professionals.
- Inclusive partnership – there is strength in diversity.
- Ensuring that our services are established on evidence-based research and informed practice.
- Practising empowerment through a relational framework – ensuring that the individual is supported in achieving their goals and not ours.

## **1.2 Our Commitment to you**

We will:

- Put in place a process for you to make a complaint about the service you have received or any interaction with the organisation which has left you feeling dissatisfied.

- We will do our very best to put things right if we have made a mistake and will try to resolve your complaint fully.
- Respond to you promptly, efficiently and to the best of our ability.
- Give you relevant advice, providing clear and accurate information.
- Be polite and fair in our dealings with you, while always remaining impartial and sensitive to your request.
- Ensure that your rights to equal treatment are upheld as set out in legislation and best practice.
- Insofar as practicable, meet any specific needs or requirements that you may have.
- Protect the personal information you give us. Our Privacy Statement is on the web and our Data Protection Policy is available on request.
- Inform you of your rights and entitlements as appropriate.

### **1.3 Help us to help you**

We value your opinion.

You can help us to improve by providing feedback. We welcome all feedback. We will use your feedback to continue to improve our service.

### **1.4 Communications with us**

When you contact us, we expect you to treat our staff with respect, courtesy and consideration.



E-mail - [info@cranncentre.ie](mailto:info@cranncentre.ie)

- When you contact us by e-mail, you receive an automated reply acknowledging your e-mail.
- You will receive a full response to your e-mail within five working days.
- If it is not possible to respond fully within five working days, we will tell you when we hope to respond fully. Sometimes, an enquiry requires a more detailed response.

- Each e-mail correspondence to you will include a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address.
- Your privacy will be respected and your enquiry will be treated in confidence.



**Phone** - 021 428 9267

- Our telephone lines are operated Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm.
- We will answer the phone as quickly as possible and try to answer your query immediately.
- If we need to transfer you, we will tell you the name of the person to whom you are being transferred.
- If you leave a voice message, we will aim to respond by the next working day.
- We will respond to your enquiry fully within 5 working days.
- If it is not possible to respond fully within five working days, we will tell you when we hope to respond fully. Sometimes, an enquiry requires a more detailed response.
- Crann staff will identify themselves and their area of work when they answer the phone and when they phone you.
- We will be polite and helpful in our conversations with you and will provide you with clear and correct information.
- Your privacy will be respected and your enquiry will be treated in confidence.



**Written correspondence**

**Crann Centre**, Classis, Ovens, Co. Cork, P31TX39

- When you write to us, we will acknowledge receipt of your correspondence within 5 working days.
- We will respond in writing fully within 10 working days.
- If it is not possible to respond fully within five working days, we will tell you when we hope to respond fully. Sometimes, an enquiry requires a more detailed response.
- Any letter you receive from the Crann Centre will have a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address.

- We will use plain English in our replies.
- Your privacy will be respected and your enquiry will be treated in confidence.



#### Visiting Crann

- We operate a drop in policy from Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm or you can call to make an appointment.
- We will be always polite and helpful to you.
- We will provide you with clear and correct information.
- Your privacy will be respected and your enquiry will be treated in confidence.



#### Social Media and Digital Platforms (Facebook, Twitter etc)

We will continue to populate our social media platforms with relevant content.

- When you contact us through social media, we will first receive an automated response.
- We will respond to your enquiry fully within 5 working days.
- If your query needs a more detailed response, we may ask you to move to a more suitable communication platform such as e-mail.
- If it is not possible to respond fully within five working days, we will tell you when we hope to respond fully. Sometimes, an enquiry requires a more detailed response.
- We will review all comments and remove any inappropriate or offensive ones from the social media pages.



#### Website ([www.cranncentre.ie](http://www.cranncentre.ie))

- Our website content will be up to date and accurate.
- It will be easy to access and navigate using information that is clear and understandable.

## **1.5 Access for people with disabilities**

As part of our core values, we aim to ensure that information and services will be provided in suitable and accessible formats for you. Please contact us for any assistance you require in availing of our services. We always welcome your inputs and ideas.

## **1.6 Equality**

As a natural expression of our ethos, we have developed our equality policy to meet both legislative requirements and best practice.

## **1.7 Making a complaint**

If you are not satisfied with any of the services provided by The Crann Centre or feel that you have received a service that does not meet the standards outlined in our Charter, you have the right to complain. We will deal with your complaint fairly and politely.

### **1.7.1 How to complain**

You can raise a complaint by contacting us directly at the Crann Centre. Our first point of contact is our Complaints Officer – Shirley O'Regan. We will do our very best to put things right if we have made a mistake and will try to resolve your complaint fully. If a person wishes to complain but is unable to do so because of age, illness or disability, they are entitled to have a person to make the complaint for them and to represent them in the process of dealing with it.

When making your complaint, it will help us if you include the following information:

- Who was involved if relevant?
- What happened, when and where?
- What are your concerns?
- Have you done anything to resolve the matter?
- What do you want to happen now?
- Any other relevant information/documents.

### 1.7.2 Time Limits for Complaints

Complaints should be made within 12 months of the date of the incident or issue having taken place. In exceptional circumstances, the Complaints Officer may extend the time limit. He/she will inform you in writing, of their decision to extend/not extend the time allowed within 5 working days of making the decision.

### 1.7.3 Procedure for the Management of Complaints

#### **Stage One – Point of Contact**

We will listen your verbal complaint, identify the issues explain your options and take any appropriate immediate actions. Our aim is to resolve complaints through discussion at this stage if possible.

#### **Stage Two – Formal Investigation**

If we cannot resolve your complaint at Stage 1 or if it is inappropriate for us to do so, we will ask you to put your complaint in writing. This will be formally acknowledged and a formal investigation started. The Complaints Officer will consider during this investigation if informal resolution would be appropriate. If this is successful, the complaint will be resolved and the investigation concluded.

During the Formal Investigation, the Complaints Officer may request any such documents and communicate with any persons that they reasonably believe can assist with the investigation of the complaint. At all times, they will aim to ensure that your confidentiality and privacy be respected. It is expected that the investigation will take no longer than 30 working days.

The Complaints Officer will issue a report to the Chief Executive after completion of the investigation with conclusions and recommendations. He/she will recommend that the complaint is upheld in whole/in part or not upheld at all. The Chief Executive is solely responsible for informing you and the Complaints Officer of the steps being taken in regard of the report and whether the recommendations have been accepted, implemented or rejected and the reasons. The Chief Executive will also inform the outcome, if relevant, to the person who the complaint has been made against. This will be made within 30 working days.

### **Stage Three – Appeal of Decision**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you can make an appeal. This appeal should be made within 5 working days of the formal response of the investigation. This appeal will be made to the Board of Directors who will respond within 10 working days on receipt of the appeal. The Board will carry out a review of the report and investigation and seek further information if required. This will be carried out within 20 working days of the appeal having been received.

On completion, the Board will issue their review to the Chief Executive, the Complaints Officer and the Complainant. This review will either uphold the original recommendation or vary it or make a new one and give reasons for the decision taken. This will be done within 30 working days. The recommendations will be implemented by the Chief Executive.

### **Stage Four – Independent Review**

The Board may consider that a complaint requires an independent review, or you may

choose to refer your complaint for independent review (e.g., Ombudsman) either directly following Stage Two or following a Stage Three Internal Complaint Review.

#### **1.7.5 Anonymous Complaints and Non-Investigation**

It is the policy of the Crann Centre that all complainants must provide contact details when making a complaint to enable appropriate validation, follow up and investigation of that complaint, unless there is a good and sufficient reason for withholding this information. We will then review the complaint within the limitations of the information provided to assure that the welfare of those who access our services are not at risk and that action is taken as appropriate.

There may be times we will not be able to investigate a complaint and this will be in relation to:

- a matter that is or has been the subject of legal proceedings before a court or tribunal,
- a matter relating solely to the exercise of clinical judgment by a person acting on behalf of either the Executive or a Service Provider,
- an action taken by the Executive or a service provider solely on the advice of a person exercising clinical judgment,
- a matter relating to the recruitment or appointment of an employee by the Executive or a service provider,
- a matter relating to or affecting the terms or conditions of a contract of employment that the Chief Executive or a service provider proposes to enter into (includes terms or conditions relating to superannuation benefits, disciplinary procedures or grievance procedures),
- a matter relating to the Social Welfare Acts,
- a matter that could be the subject of an appeal under Section 60 of the Civil Registration Act 2004,
- a matter that could prejudice an investigation being undertaken by the Garda Síochána,

- a matter that has been brought before any other complaint's procedure established under an enactment (e.g., Complaints made under Part 2 of Disability Act, 2005 or the Mental Health Act 2001).

#### **1.7.6 General**

The Complaints Officer will provide the CEO with quarterly reports of complaints received. This report will include the number of complaints, the nature and the outcome of each complaint.

We will make this report available to the relevant authorities as requested.

#### **1.8 Data Protection**

At all times we will abide by our privacy statement and data protection policy making sure we meet all legislative requirements. You can ask for a copy of our data protection policies and/or read our Privacy Statement on the website.