

**MEATH WOMEN'S REFUGE & SUPPORT SERVICES COMPLAINTS POLICY &  
PROCEDURES**



**26<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

## **Introduction**

This feedback and complaints policy has been produced by Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services in accordance with the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 and in line with Sections 60-70 of that Act, is intended to reflect the Tusla Tell Us Policy and comply with the legislative requirements, including the return of data on complaints to Tusla Child and Family Agency four times a year. Individuals are not identified in the statistical data. This feedback and complaints policy and procedure document sets out MWRSS commitment to addressing complaints and incorporating feedback into our work with women and children. The policy and procedures including the feedback/complaints form will be displayed and communicated to all who access and participate in the services provided by our organization.

Meath Women's Refuge & Support Services is committed to providing the highest quality services to its clients, and welcome clients views of the service. However, we acknowledge that clients may from time to time have concerns and or feedback about the services we provide. We are dedicated to giving careful attention and a courteous and timely response to all suggestions, comments or complaints. Input from service users can be made by highlighting issues or suggestions with any member of staff, at weekly house meetings and or key worker meetings, or through the exit evaluation forms, which is provided to all clients on admission. In terms of those who access our other services and programmes, including outreach, feedback and evaluation are ongoing aspect of our work and again complaints in relation to these services can be made also.

## **Policy Statement**

### 2 Policy Statement

2.1 All feedback is valuable and welcome. It ensures that we continue to be responsive and effective and informs our future development. MWRSS strives to ensure that your contact with us is positive and beneficial. Our service is committed to learning from feedback; both positive and negative. If at any time you are unhappy with our service, please share this with our staff or managers.

### 3 Principles

- MWRSS Feedback and Complaints statements will be displayed in public areas in all service delivery locations and this policy made available to all service users and members of the public on request.
- Service users and any other people affected by our services will be facilitated and supported to give feedback, both positive and negative, and to make a complaint where they wish to do so.
- The organisation will respond to and act on this feedback as appropriate.
- MWRSS will respond to those who give feedback or make a complaint within the specified timeframe and will advise them of any actions taken or recommended where that is appropriate.
- All complainants will be treated with dignity and respect.
- Making a complaint will not adversely affect current or future access to services.
- All feedback and complaints will be recorded and securely stored.

### 4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 This policy is for implementation by all MWRSS staff, volunteers, students etc. All staff, volunteers, students etc. will be provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction and will be trained or otherwise given support to understand its implications for their role. They are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with this policy, that service users are informed of this policy and are facilitated and supported to give feedback or make a complaint.

4.2 The Complaints Officer is Sinead Smith- Manager

### 5 Feedback and Complaints

5.1 Feedback is information received by our service from any person(s) about their experience of any aspect of our service or of how these services are provided. Feedback in relation to any aspect of our service is welcome and informs our effectiveness and future development. Feedback can be positive or negative. Not all negative feedback is a complaint.

5.2 Feedback can be given;

- Verbally, in person or by phone
- Via our feedback form, which is available on our website [www.dvservicesmeath.ie](http://www.dvservicesmeath.ie)
- By email [admin@dvservices.ie](mailto:admin@dvservices.ie)
- In writing

5.3 Feedback, whether positive or negative, will be forwarded to the relevant manager and acknowledged within 10 working days. All Feedback will be collated, analysed and actioned as appropriate by the manager and shared as appropriate.

## **MWRSS COMPLAINTS POLICY**

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about an organisation's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the organisation.

The 'Child and Family Agency Act 2013' established the right to make a complaint about any action or inaction on the part of Tusla (or a service provider acting on behalf of Tusla of which MWRSS is a service provider) that it is claimed does not accord with fair or sound administrative practice and adversely affects the person making the complaint or on whose behalf the complaint is made. MWRSS can be described as a service provider under the act as it carries out services on behalf of Tusla in the form of a service level agreement.

### **What action could constitute a complaint?**

An action by MWRSS does not represent fair or sound administrative practice if it is:

- Taken without proper permission or authority;
- Taken for unnecessary reasons;
- The result of negligence or carelessness;
- Based on incorrect or incomplete information;
- Discriminatory;
- Based on undesirable administrative practices or in any other respect contrary to fair or sound administration.

### **Principles of the MWRSS Complaints Policy**

The following principles underpin MWRSS approach to receiving complaints:

- MWRSS will adhere to its legislative requirements under the 'Child and Family Agency Act 2013' and will also be guided by the Office of the Ombudsman's 'Guide to Standards of Best Practice';

- The complaints procedure must acknowledge the right of each individual to make a complaint and to enable them to do so;
  - Create an ethos of independence;
  - Achieve equity for complaints.
- 
- Complaints are essential to the organisation's learning and development;
  - Complaints will be used to inform decision-making and the planning, design and delivery of MWRSS services as appropriate;
    - People who use MWRSS services and those impacted by MWRSS services are routinely reminded of the organisation's complaint process and how to avail of this process;
    - MWRSS staff will advise, actively support and assist, as appropriate, those who wish to make complaints to the organisation;
    - MWRSS will resolve complaints as expeditiously as practicable;
    - All MWRSS complaints officers and review officers/panel will receive adequate training where required;
    - All individuals making complaints will be treated with dignity and respect;
    - Making a complaint will in no way adversely affect the service an individual receives from MWRSS.

#### **APPROACH TO THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND PROCESS**

The Board of MWRSS is obliged to set up an objective, appropriate, fair and equitable complaints procedure for individuals wishing to complain to management about a staff member or a service provided. The procedure must take place within a reasonable timeframe and the complainant must be supported and enabled to express their dissatisfaction or concerns and/or make their complaint.

#### **Procedure: Aims**

The complaints procedure aims to:

- Deal with complaints promptly at a local level without having to escalate the matter to a complaints officer;
- Handle complaints efficiently and sympathetically;

- Offer complainants an apology for poor service or for mistakes that have occurred;
- Improve the quality of service from feedback of complaints;
- Encourage and promote local resolution;
- Provide a mechanism to review complaints unresolved locally;
- Publicize complaints procedures;
- Train staff in the handling of complaints.

### **The role of staff and the processing of complaints**

MWRSS staff are expected to deal with complaints by either:

- Resolving the complaint, or
- Referring the complaint to the most appropriate person, or
- Forwarding the complaint to the complaints officer who in the case of MWRSS will be the manager of MWRSS unless the complaint is about the manager then nominated members of the board of MWRSS will act as the complaints officer

### **Processing complaints**

Complaints will be acknowledged promptly initially from the point of contact and forwarded to the manager. Any staff members named in a complaint will be advised of the details of the complaint at this point. Complainants will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days. Where complaints are provided in writing the acknowledgement will be issued in writing. Where complaints cannot be resolved locally, they are referred to the relevant complaints officer i.e. the manager.

When a complaint also gives rise to a child protection or welfare concern, the concern will be referred to the area duty social work team in accordance with Tusla policy. Where a staff member is named in a complaint, the staff member must be advised of the detail of the complaint that relates to that staff member.

### **Complainants**

Anyone who is being or was provided with a service by the organisation may make a complaint, if dissatisfied, those seeking or who have sought provision of such a service may also do so.

If illness, age or disability prevent the complainant from making a complaint in person, they may nominate any of the following to act on their behalf:

- a close relative or carer;
- any person who by law or by court appointment had the care of the affairs of that person;
- any legal representative of the person;
- any other person with the person's consent.

### **When can a complaint be made?**

A complaint can be made within 12 months of the event i.e. the action or inaction which gives rise to the complaint or, the date of the complainant becoming aware of the action or inaction giving rise to the complaint. If MWRSS decides to extend this time limit which is at its own discretion e.g. in the case of a bereavement or illness or where new information becomes available over time. There must be a clear reason for this as it's important to be fair to all parties and this must be documented.

### **Nature of complaints and who can make a complaint**

A person can complain about any action of the staff or a service provided, claiming that it does not accord with fair and sound administrative practice and adversely affects or affected the complainant.

Complaints can only be made by individuals. The person making a complaint must be the person who was affected or have the permission of the one affected to make the complaint.

HR issues are mostly excluded, as are those that subject to legal proceedings e.g. a garda investigation. The following are types of complaints that are excluded:

A matter that is or has been subject of legal proceedings before a court or tribunal;

- A matter relating solely to the exercise of clinical judgement;
- An action taken by the organisation solely on the advice of a person exercising clinical judgement;
- A matter relating to recruitment or appointments;
- A matter relating to or affecting the terms or condition of a contract of employment;
- A matter relating to the 'Social Welfare Act';

- 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 An Garda Síochána;
- A matter that has been brought before any other complaints' procedure established by law;
- A matter that gives rise to child protection or welfare concerns (these concerns must be referred to the area duty social work team)

**See Appendix 1** for complaints that do not fall under the remit of MWRSS complaints policy. These complaints should be directed to the appropriate personnel within the organisation i.e. the management and board using the relevant policy, procedure, guidelines or legislation.

Under section 61 of *The Child and Family Agency Act, 2013*, Complaints procedures are validly applied to:

An action of the agency or a service provider (in this case MWRSS) which it is claimed does not accord with fair or sound administrative practice, and adversely affects the person by whom or on whose behalf the complaint is made. As previously stated,

An action does not accord with fair and sound administrative practice if it is:

- Taken without proper authority
- Taken on irrelevant grounds
- The result of negligence or carelessness
- Based on erroneous or incomplete information
- Improperly discriminatory
- Based on undesirable administrative practice or
- In any respect contrary to fair or sound administration

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES FOR MWRSS**

### **Handling Complaints**

Any person seeking to make a complaint will be provided with a copy of the complaints procedure which is set out below.

The organisation has a nominated complaints officer in this case the manager of MWRSS. The complaints officer should be at least twice removed e.g. two people removed from the subject of complaint e.g. a staff member. In the case of a complaint against the manager the complaints officer will be a member(s) of the board of directors. If their decision on the complaint is appealed an external reviewer/review panel will be appointed.

In the case of an appeal of the decision of a complaints officer i.e. the manager, the review panel will be made up of members of the board. In exceptional circumstances and in terms of public interest requirements, Tusla may appoint an internal reviewer.

### **COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

To achieve the objectives set out previously in the complaints policy Meath Women's Refuge & Support Services has adopted a complaints process or procedure, which allows for complaints to be dealt with at local level in the first instance. There are four stages to the complaints process.

- **Stage 1 Local Resolution**
- **Stage 2 Referral to complaints officer**
- **Stage 3 Review of the Complaint Findings or Recommendations by a Review Officer**
- **Stage 4 Independent Review by the Ombudsman's office or by the Office of the Ombudsman for Children**

#### **Stage 1 Local resolution**

- (a) Seeking early and local resolution is an important element in the handling of complaints. Frontline staff must try to resolve any problem to the complainant's satisfaction promptly and locally. They must keep a record of such complaints on the recording template. MWRSS must provide quarterly reports on complaints received, number and nature resolved informally and formally and the outcome of any investigation. Some complainants may not choose to seek local resolution and may choose referral to the complaints officer and this will be supported.

#### **Stage 2 Referral to complaints officer**

(b) If the complainant is dissatisfied with any proposed resolution, they may refer the complaint to the complaints officer who is the manager of MWRSS;

Complainants should know of their right to complain and how to register their complaint. A summary of the process is outlined below:

- The complaints procedure should be easily accessed and in verbal or written form (see appendix 2). Where verbal this will be recorded by the staff member taking the complaint on the complaints form and checked with the complainant for signature to ensure it is documented accurately.
- Complaints may be dealt with immediately or referred for further action;
- Complainants are entitled to an acknowledgement of receipt of their grievance within 10 working days;
- When there are delays, the complainant must be kept up to date and receive an explanation.

A complaints officer will examine a complaint to decide if the matter complained of can be dealt with under the organization's service complaints policy and procedure. Some complaints cannot be managed by this policy (see Appendix One). In such cases the complaints officer will advise the complainant if there is an alternative process available to deal with the complaint matter. The complaints officer should advise the board of a complaint received and the nature of the complaint. Complaints officers must consider their proximity to an issue complained of before starting an investigation. A complaints officer should not be involved in managing a complaint about a matter in which they have had either a direct or indirect involvement (a procedure for this is outlined earlier in this document). All participants in the complaints process will be treated fairly.

The complaints officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant within **10 working days**. The complaints officer, if necessary, will clarify the exact nature of the complaint with the complainant. As already stated, if the complaints officer identifies that the complainant needs support or assistance, they will advise the complainant how this will be provided. The complaints officer will maintain a record on its complaints database of all complaints received.

A complaints officer has a number of options for dealing with a complaint:

- Referral for local resolution (provided that this option has not been availed of previously);
- Informal resolution of the complaint;
- Mediation;
- Investigation.

### **Referral for Local Resolution**

On receiving a complaint, the complaints officer following discussion with the complainant may refer the complaint for local resolution (provided that this option has not been availed of previously).

### **Informal Resolution**

Where local resolution is not an appropriate option to explore or has been unsuccessful, the complaints officer, with consent of the parties involved, may consider whether it would be practicable to proceed with an informal resolution of the complaint. Informal resolution is where the complaints officer engages actively with the complainant and or relevant staff with a view to achieving an agreed resolution to the complaint issue(s). The complaints officer will record the form of informal resolution offered, record the outcome and advise the board of same.

Where informal resolution was not successful, the complaints officer will either:

- Close the complaint and record the reason for doing so, or
- Initiate an alternative means of resolving the complaint such as mediation or investigation.

### **Mediation**

The complaints officer may consider mediation as a means of achieving resolution where both parties agree to the process. The decision to offer mediation is made by the complaints officer on a case-by-case basis. Mediation is a process in which the parties to the complaint, with the assistance of a neutral and agreed third party (the mediator):

- Identify the issues;
- Develop options;
- Consider alternatives, and

- Endeavour to reach an agreement.

The complaints officer will record the attempt at mediation, record the outcome and advise the board. However, the details of the mediation sessions remain confidential to the participants. Where mediation is not successful, the complaints officer will either close the complaint and record the reason for doing so or initiate an investigation of the complaint.

The complaints officer will record the attempt at mediation, record the outcome (whether successful or not) and advise the appropriate line managers. This record will be used for organisational improvement purposes and to facilitate quarterly reports to Tusla.

### **Investigation**

In situations where an investigation is required, it will be carried out within **30 working days of the decision to investigate**. If this timeframe cannot be met, the complainant and staff members named in the complaint will be informed promptly and provided with update every 20 working days **thereafter** until the investigation is completed. To facilitate the investigation, the complaints officer may seek reports, files or documents from the services involved. They may choose to interview staff members named in the complaint. The complaints officer may establish an investigation team if, in the opinion of the complaints officer, such a team is warranted.

The complaints officer may also interview or request reports from other employees or witnesses, as appropriate. They may request former staff to be interviewed when it is considered appropriate to the investigation. MWRSS staff must cooperate with all stages of the complaints process. The complaints officer must complete the investigation into a complaint as soon as practicable. **If the investigation is not completed within six months of receipt of the complaint, the complaints officer must provide the complainant and the staff concerned with an explanation for the delay and outline a plan of action for completing the complaint investigation.**

Following the investigation, the complaints officer will prepare a report which will include:

- Details of the complaint;
- Description of the complaint investigation process;
- Response of the service and or staff members concerned;
- Findings of the investigation:

1. Uphold the complaint, or
2. Uphold the complaint in part, or
3. Not uphold the complaint.

- Reasons for the findings;
- Recommendations and the reasons for same.

Within the report individuals should be anonymised while the report still needs to be meaningful and legible for service users/complainants. Where possible and for clarity, designations such as D1, D2 etc may be used. All reports must be compliant with data protection legislation.

The complaints officer will forward the completed report to the complainant, the board of directors and staff members named in the complaint. All reports shall be compliant with data protection legislation. Copies of the recommendations will be sent by the complaints officer to the persons responsible for their implementation i.e. the management team and board of directors. The complaints officer will advise the complainant in writing of their right to have the recommendations of the complaint reviewed internally (**stage 3)-this internal review will be carried out by Tusla and their right to refer the complaint to the Ombudsman or Ombudsman for Children (stage 4).**

The complaints officer will keep a record of the findings and recommendations of all investigations (please see complaints record). This record will be used for organizational improvement purposes and to facilitate quarterly reports to Tusla.

If in the course of investigation, the Investigation Officer identifies child protection or welfare concerns these will be addressed in line with the Child Safeguarding Procedures and in the case of allegations against staff or volunteers Procedures for Responding to Allegations against Staff/Volunteers.

### **Stage 3 Tusla Review**

Where a complaint remains unresolved or the complainant is dissatisfied with the proposed resolution or the implementation of the Investigation Report, they can seek a

review. **A request for internal review should be sought within 30 days of receiving the final report recommendations.** Such a request should identify the elements of the recommendations or findings that the complainant requires to have reviewed and the reasons for requesting that they be reviewed.

**A request for review should be directed to:**

**National Manager,  
DSGBV Unit,  
Tusla,  
Brunel Building  
HSQ,  
Dublin 8.**

Include the following if relevant: *For (name of organisation) (name of individual/role) has been approved by Tusla to conduct complaint investigation reviews on behalf of Tusla.*

**9.4.3 If the complainant is not satisfied by the proposed review process they may go directly to the next stage in the process - review by the Ombudsman's Office or the Office of the Ombudsman for Children.**

#### **9.4.4 Tusla Review Process**

Tusla will advise the relevant people: the complainant, the relevant head of service and the subject of the complaint that the review is being conducted and provide details of the person carrying out the review.

The review officer will establish if the request for a review can be dealt with under the review procedure and, if so, shall conduct the review accordingly.

- All participants will be treated fairly in this process.
- The review officer cannot deal with new complaint issues at this stage.
- The review process may require a fresh examination of files and documents together with fresh interviews with relevant parties to the complaint.

#### **Role of the Review Officer**

- The review officer will endeavour to conduct and conclude the review process within 30 working days of receiving the request. If this timeframe cannot be met, the complainant and relevant staff, and service manager must be informed and provided with an update every 20 working days thereafter until the review is completed.
- The review officer appointed may request all documentation relevant to the complaint and communicate with any person that he/she reasonably believes can assist with the review of the complaint.
- The review officer will maintain notes of interviews.
- The review officer can determine the appropriateness of a recommendation or finding made in the original complaint investigation report and decide whether to:

- Uphold it in full;
- Uphold it in part;
- Not uphold it;
- Vary it;
- Make a new recommendation.
- On completion of the review, the review officer will prepare a report which will include:
  - Details of the review request;
  - Description of the review investigation process, including records sought and referenced, individuals interviewed or consulted, and policies or procedural documents considered;
  - Response of the service and or staff members concerned;
  - Findings of the review:
    - Uphold the complaint investigation recommendation(s), or
    - Uphold the complaint investigation recommendation(s) in part, or
    - Not uphold the complaint investigation recommendation(s).
    - Varied recommendation(s) (if any);
    - New recommendation(s) (if any);
    - Reasons for the findings in the complaint investigation.
- The review officer will forward the completed report to the complainant; the relevant head of service; the complaints manager in the Tusla Quality Assurance Directorate; any relevant staff members concerned (All staff named in the complaint) and the Manager for Tusla DSGBV programme. Any staff or others interviewed during the process will be provided with the opportunity to review references to them, their statements or evidence if contained within the report.
- All reports shall be compliant with data protection legislation.
- Copies of the recommendations will be sent to the persons responsible for their implementation. If managers decide not to implement the recommendations of a review officer's report, they must advise the complainant and the review officer within 30 working days of the reason for this decision.

The review officer shall advise the complainant in writing of the right to external review by the Ombudsman or the Ombudsman for Children.

The review officer shall keep a record of all reviews conducted and their outcomes.

#### **Stage 4 Review by the Ombudsman's Office or the Office of the Ombudsman for Children**

At any stage of the complaints process, the complainant may seek a review of the complaint by the Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children.

The complainant must be informed of their right to seek an independent review from the Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children at any stage of the complaint management process, after the original assignment to the complaints officer.

All requests for reviews may be addressed to the:

**Office of the Ombudsman,  
18 Lower Leeson Street,  
Dublin 2, D02 HE97.**  
Tel: +353-1-639 Lo-call: 1890223030 Fax (01) 639 5674  
[www.ombudsman.ie](http://www.ombudsman.ie)

**Ombudsman for Children's Office,  
Millennium House,  
52-56 Great Strand Street,  
Dublin 1.**  
Tel 01-865 6800 <https://www.oco.ie/>

## **Apologies and Redress**

### **Apologies**

Where a complaints officer or a review officer recommends that MWRSS considers offering an apology to the complainant, the decision regarding this apology will be made by a person at board level in consultation with Tusla. Redress should be consistent and fair for both the complainant and the service against which the complaint was made.

## **Complaints Against Staff Members**

Meath Women's Refuge recognizes the pivotal role staff play in providing quality service and places a high value on employee motivation, efficiency and effectiveness.

For the organisation to function efficiently and effectively we must have clear policies and procedures stating standards expected and how any deviation from those standards will be managed.

If a complaint is made against a staff member, the manager should immediately inform the staff member in writing, along with a copy of all written reports on the complaint. A meeting is called to discuss the nature of the complaint and give the staff member an opportunity to respond. The staff member may be accompanied by a representative of

their choice. It is not appropriate for a staff member to complain on behalf of a service user as this constitutes a conflict of interest. If a staff member complains about a colleague, this is processed through Meath Women's Refuge grievance policy.

In the case of a complaint against the complaints officer i.e. the manager, the board will appoint an external complaints officer to investigate the complaint, where an investigation is required where informal resolution and mediation is not possible.

All complaints are dealt with through the process outlined in this policy. MWRSS staff members are expected to cooperate with the process. Supports must be provided for staff members against whom complaints are made.

This includes:

- Time to deal with and respond to the complaint;
- Opportunity to give their side of the story;
- Opportunity to be supported by a work colleague, trade union representative or official, during the investigation;
- Opportunity to be accompanied by a work colleague, trade union representative or official, during interview as part of the complaint investigation;
- Emphasis on resolution, not blame;
- Being advised of their rights;
- Employees must be informed of any support networks and people who can assist them throughout the complaint management process, for example:
  - o Peer Support Service;
  - o Professional bodies;
  - o Human resources department;
  - o Union officials/local representation.

All staff members who are the subject of complaints can expect to be afforded fair procedure and to be treated with dignity and respect.

It is the responsibility of the service manager to ensure that the above support or equivalent as appropriate are provided to non-staff members who are the subject of complaints for example, students, volunteers, former staff.

## Staff Training

Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services is committed to building a culture across the organisation that values feedback and complaints. Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services is committed to enabling staff to deal with feedback and complaints effectively and efficiently.

To ensure appropriate skill levels are maintained, MWRSS will facilitate ongoing training for all staff, student and volunteers regarding responding to feedback and complaints.

All those designated as complaints officers and reviewers within this organisation have been provided with appropriate training for that role.

## Provision of Statistical Data on Complaints to Tusla

Under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 and its contract of service delivery with Tusla Child and Family Agency this service undertakes to provide quarterly reports to Tusla regarding complaints and outcomes. No individual identification is reported, and the information provided is purely statistical.

Where an individual seeks a review of a complaint investigation report from Tusla, in completing that review, Tusla may seek copies of personal records from this organisation. This is a statutory function of Tusla under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 and, for this reason, the consent of the individual service user, (i.e. the data subject) may not always be required.

This policy was adopted by the board of directors of MWRSS at its board meeting on:

Chairperson Signature:

On 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022

This policy will be reviewed in two years in September 2024

## **Appendix 1**

### **Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services Feedback and Complaints Statement**

*A copy of our Feedback and Complaint Policy is available on request.*

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Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services is committed to learning from feedback; both positive and negative. If at any time you are unhappy with our service, please share this with our staff or managers.

A complaint is a statement, written or verbal, that indicates that you have been adversely affected by an action or failure to act on our part.

#### **Who can give feedback or make a complaint?**

- Anyone who is using or has used our service or is trying or has tried to use our service.
- A close relative, carer, legal representative or other advocate with written permission of the person adversely affected.
- Close relatives or carers of a deceased service user.

#### **How can I give feedback or complain?**

- Verbally, in person or by phone
- Using our feedback form, by email to [Insert detail] or otherwise in writing.
- A staff member will assist you in making the complaint if you believe you need assistance.

#### **Complaints - A Four Step Process**

1. When you make a complaint a staff member will try to resolve the issue with you locally. If this isn't satisfactory, or if you prefer, the complaint will be forwarded to the manager.
2. The formal complaint will be acknowledged within 10 working days, and a complaint officer will be assigned.
  - The Complaints officer will consider referral to local resolution if not already tried.
  - Otherwise an investigation will be commenced and referral to mediation maybe considered.
  - A report will be prepared indicating one of three findings: upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. Where appropriate the report will include recommendations for the service about which the complaint was made.
  - Where mediation has been successful, details will remain confidential to the parties.
  - All "resolution" and "mediation" options are only by consent of both parties.

3. If you are not satisfied with the report, recommendations or the implementation of the report recommendations, you can request a review by contacting the National DSGBV Manager.
4. If you are still not satisfied you can seek a review by the Office of the Ombudsman or the Ombudsman for Children.

## Appendix 2



### Feedback/Complaints Form

You can complete this form and return it to Meath Women's Refuge and Support Service 39 Flowerhill, Navan, Co. Meath or by email to the complaints officer [manager@dvservicesmeath.ie](mailto:manager@dvservicesmeath.ie) . If your complaint is about the manager, it can be posted to the same address marked confidential for the attention of the chairperson.

How would you describe your feedback to us? (please tick a box)			
Compliment	Comment	Complaint	Other
If you are making a complaint do you consent to MWRSS accessing your personal record information for the purpose of dealing with the complaint?			
YES	NO		
What area of our organisation do you want to tell us about? Refuge Outreach Programme Area			
Can you tell us what you want us to know about your experience of the service concerned or the experience of the person on whose behalf you are acting (include relevant details of dates and locations and the names of any of the people who were involved).			
What are your contact details?			
Name:		Phone No:	
Address:			
Email Address:			
If you are acting on behalf of another person in completing this form, please provide contact details for the person on whose behalf you are acting:			
Name:		Phone No:	
Address:			
Email Address:			

### Appendix 3

1. Complaints Data- Internal-Service -improvement  
Tusla.

2. Statistical Reporting Form for

#### 1. Complaints Data- Internal-Service improvement

Complaint Record number:
Date Complaint Received:
Date acknowledgement sent:
Brief Outline of complaint  Resolution process(s) used  Stage at which Resolution was successful  Review if relevant
Brief Outline of Recommendation(s)
Outcomes
Signed: _____ (Service Manager)      Date: _____

## **Appendix 4**

### Complaints not covered under this policy

1. Details of Complaint/Allegation Policy, Procedure, Guidelines or Legislation to be Followed Concerns in relation to the protection or welfare of a child These concerns must be referred to the area duty social work team to be dealt with in accordance with 'Children First' guidance.
2. Allegations of abuse made against a staff member(s) Professional misconduct and fitness to practice issues Complaints by staff of any inappropriate behaviour of other staff at work will deal with the complaint in line with the relevant policies, procedures and legislation
3. Complaints against the HR/recruitment process-Refer to line manager to deal with the complaint in line with some or all of the following:
4. Complaints in relation to requests made under the 'Freedom of Information Act 2014' 'Freedom of Information Act 2014'
5. Complaints in relation to breaches of data protection rights Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003