

The Living Well



Complaints Policy

Review frequency	As necessary
Review responsibility	Chaplain and/or Trustees

Approved by Trustees	September 2014
Signed by Chaplain	
Reviewed	April 2020
Next Review Date	April 2023

Complaints Policy

Introduction

At The Living Well we endeavour to provide a safe and reassuring environment for our visitors. As a matter of good practice and safeguarding we have put together the following procedure to be used in the event of any complaint received. This is a provision of due diligence and it is our sincere hope that people who come to us are happy with the service they receive.

Resolving concerns informally

- 1.1 Individuals are always welcome to discuss any concerns. If the complaint cannot be immediately dealt with, a clear note of the nature of the complaint as well as date, name and contact address, email address or phone number of the Complainant will be made.
- 1.2 The person dealing with the matter will make sure that the individual is clear what action (if any) has been agreed and put it in writing.
- 1.3 If it is not possible to resolve the complaint, individuals should proceed to Complaints Procedure Stage 1 detailed below.

Complaints Procedure Stage 1: Investigation by the Chaplain

- 2.1 Complaints at this stage need to be recorded in writing. Complainants may also make their complaint verbally and can expect help to put their complaint in writing. If appropriate this help could be a member of our own team here, or if preferred an external representative.
- 2.2 The Chaplain, or designated person if it seems more appropriate, will acknowledge the complaint in writing within four working days of receiving the written complaint. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of The Living Well's complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This should normally be within ten working days. If this proves impossible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date. This will be within a maximum of 20 working days unless it is a particularly complex issue in which case the complainant will be kept informed of expected timelines.
- 2.3 The Chaplain, or designated person, will provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet them to supplement any information provided previously. It will be made clear to the complainant that if s/he wishes s/he might be accompanied to any meeting by a friend or relative plus interpreter if needed who can speak on his/her behalf or to provide support.

- 2.4 If necessary the Chaplain, or designated person, will interview other parties and take statements from those involved. If a member of the team or volunteer is complained against, they must have the opportunity to present their case. They may be accompanied at any stage by another member of the team, but it would not be appropriate to involve someone from outside The Living Well from whom confidential information should be withheld.
- 2.5 The Chaplain, or designated person, will keep written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.
- 2.6 Once all the relevant facts have been established as far as possible, the Chaplain, or designated person, will then produce a written response to the complainant, including a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this will include what action The Living Well will take to resolve the complaint, or to prevent a similar situation occurring again. The complainant will be advised that should s/he wish to take the complaint further s/he should notify the Trustees of the charity within 20 working days of receiving the letter.
- 2.7 If the complaint is against the Chaplain, or if the Chaplain has been closely involved in the issue, the Chair of the Trustees will carry out all the Stage 1 procedures.

Stage 2: Review by the Trustees

- 3.1 Should the informal process and stage 1 not resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant, they should refer the matter to the Chair of the Trustees and complete the form given in Appendix A. The Chair of the Trustees, or a designated person if the Chair has carried out Stage 1 procedure, will write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the written request for the Trustees to review the complaint within three working days of receipt. The acknowledgement will inform the complainant that three members of the Trustees (to be known as the 'Panel') will hear the complaint within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. The letter will also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received at least 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- 3.2 A meeting of the panel will be convened and a Chair appointed. No trustees with prior involvement in the issues complained about will be included on the panel. The Chaplain will not sit on the Panel.
- 3.3 The Chair of the Panel will ensure the Panel hears the complaint within twenty working days of receiving the letter. All relevant correspondence relating to the complaint will be given to each Panel member as soon as the

composition of the panel is confirmed. If the correspondence is extensive, the Chair may prepare a thorough summary for sending to Panel members.

- 3.4 The Chair will write and inform the complainant, Chaplain, any relevant witnesses and members of the Panel at least three working days in advance of the date, time and place of the meeting. The notification will also inform the complainant of his/her right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or relative plus interpreter if needed and explain how the meeting will be conducted and the complainant's right to submit further written evidence to the Panel.
- 3.5 The Chaplain will be invited to attend the Panel meeting and will be asked to prepare a written report for the Panel in response to the complaint. All attendees including the complainant should receive a set of the relevant documents including the Chaplain's report and the agenda, at least five working days prior to the meeting.
- 3.6 Submission of additional relevant documents or requests for additional attendees will be considered by the Chair of the Panel.
- 3.7 At the Panel hearing:
 - The complainant will have the opportunity to present their complaint.
 - The Chaplain will explain The Living Well's position.
 - Those present will have the opportunity to ask questions, including the complainant.
 - Panel members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant and the Chaplain.
 - The Chaplain will be given the opportunity to make a final statement to the panel.
 - The complainant will be given the opportunity to make a final statement to the panel.
 - The Chair will ask the complainant if he or she feels they have had a fair hearing.

The Chair of the Panel has responsibility to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted.

- 3.8 The Chair of the Panel will explain to the complainant and Chaplain that the Panel will consider its decision and that a written decision will be sent to both parties within 15 working days. The complainant, Chaplain, other members of staff and witnesses will then leave.
- 3.9 The Panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and
 - Agree a decision on the complaint;
 - Decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
 - and

- Where appropriate, suggest recommended changes to The Living Well's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

3.10 A written statement clearly setting out the decision of the Panel must be sent to the complainant and the Chaplain. The letter to the complainant should also advise how to take the complaint further. Depending on the nature of the complaint this may include referral to the Diocesan Bishop.

3.11 The Living Well should ensure that a copy of all correspondence and notes are kept on file.

Complaints Form**Appendix A**

Please complete and return to the Administrator, The Living Well, The Vicarage, Vicarage Lane, Nonington, Kent, CT15 4JT or Chair of Trustees if only used for second phase of complaints procedure.	
Your Name	
Address, including Post Code	
Email address	
Daytime Tel Number	
Evening Tel Number	
Please give a brief summary of your complaint here: A fuller explanation may be submitted as appropriate.	
What actions, if any, have you taken to try and resolve your complaint?	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem?	
Are you attaching any paperwork?	
Signature	
Date	
For Office Use only	
Date acknowledgement sent:	By Whom:
Complaint referred to:	Date: