**Service User Complaints Procedure**

**RASASC welcome complaints as feedback, to help us put things right and improve our work and service. We recognise that we support many individuals at a vulnerable point in their lives. We intend to listen well to complainants and be mindful of their situation.**

We will:

* Ensure that making a complaint is as easy as possible
* Make our policy clearly, publicly accessible on the website, and in spaces where we regularly work
* Highlight our policy with service users and when agreements are reviewed
* Treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction which calls for a response
* Deal with a complaint promptly and politely.  In some circumstances, we may need to inform partners or funders about complaints, but we will always deal with complaints as confidentially as possible
* Respond in the right way – for example with an explanation or an apology where a mistake has been made
* Learn from complaints, ensuring they are used to improve our work and service

In the first instance many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly.

If concerns cannot be resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure can be used. The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction.

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**Definition.**A complaint is ‘any expression of dissatisfaction (with RASASC, with a member of staff, volunteer, or with a Trustee) that relates to RASASC and that requires a formal response’.

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**What complaints are accepted?** We accept complaints about how you have been affected by RASASC or, if you are acting as an advocate for someone who has been affected. We do not generally accept complaints that:

* are anonymous
* are without serious purpose
* are malicious, abusive or discriminatory or designed to cause disruption
* we believe to be vexatious – i.e. prolific, repetitious or where reasonable attempts to resolve concerns have been made

We are sensitive to the fact that if clients raise similar issues repeatedly, despite receiving a full response, there may be underlying reasons for this persistence.  In deciding whether a complaint is vexatious, we will take into account all circumstances. Our main consideration will be the issues raised in the complaint rather than the behaviour of the complainant.

We will:​

* Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
* Respond within a stated period of time;
* Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
* Take action where appropriate.

A complainant’s responsibility is to:​

* Bring their complaint, in writing, to our attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
* Raise concerns promptly and directly with the Operations Director who will be responsible for further action;
* Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
* Allow us a reasonable time to deal with the matter; and
* Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond RASASAC’s control.

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**Investigation Procedure**​

RASASC will investigate the complaint in a manner appropriate to resolve it speedily and efficiently; and during the investigation, keep the complainant informed, as far as reasonably practicable, as to the progress of the investigation.

As soon as reasonably practicable after completing the investigation, RASASC will send the complainant a written response, signed by the responsible person, which includes a report detailing the following:

(i) an explanation of how the complaint has been considered; and

(ii) the conclusions reached in relation to the complaint, including any matters for which the complaint specifies**,**or RASASC considers, that remedial action is needed; and confirmation as to whether RASASC is satisfied that any action needed in consequence of the complaint has been taken or is proposed to be taken.

**Monitoring and Reporting**​

The Trustees of RASASC will be informed of all complaints.  RASASC will report complaints to commissioners in accordance with contracts and service level agreements.

**Formal Complaints Procedure**​

**Stage 1**

If unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the Operations Director julie@rapecentre.org.uk or Therapy Services Director helen@rapecentre.org.uk If the complaint is in relation to the Operations Director or Therapy Services Director, then you should write to the Chairperson at PO Box 35 Warrington, WA1 1DH. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking. RASASC follow NHS and Charity Commission regulations, as such you will be offered an opportunity to discuss which process you would like to follow in relation to your complaint. You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within three weeks.

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**Stage 2**​

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint then you can write to RASASC’s Chairperson and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect the Chairperson to acknowledge your request in writing within 3 working days of receipt and normally receive a response within 28 days.

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**Final Stage**​

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from RASASC’s Chairperson, then you have the option of writing to the [Charity Commission](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission) at Charity Commission Direct, PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG, stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. All information on making complaints to the Charity Commission can be found on the Charity Commission’s website [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission).