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Approving Committee:	First Person Project Board of Directors
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1. Introduction

First Person Project CIC is committed to providing high-quality mental health services and maintaining a positive and respectful relationship with service users. This Complaints Procedure outlines the organization's process for handling and resolving complaints made by service users, as well as complaints from other services and members of the general public. First Person Project CIC aims to ensure that complaints are addressed promptly, fairly, and in accordance with the principles of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. Furthermore, all complaints will be handled in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other applicable data protection laws.

2. Definitions

- Service User: An individual receiving mental health services from First Person Project CIC.
- Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction made by a service user, another service, or a member of the general public regarding the organization's services, actions, or conduct.
- GDPR: The General Data Protection Regulation, a comprehensive data protection law that sets out rules for the processing and protection of personal data of individuals within the European Union (EU).

3. Principles

First Person Project CIC adheres to the following principles when handling complaints:

- Complaints will be taken seriously and treated with respect and empathy.
- Complaints will be handled in a fair, impartial, and confidential manner, respecting the rights of all parties involved.

- Complaints will be addressed promptly and transparently, keeping complainants informed of the progress and outcomes.
- Service users, other services, and members of the general public will be provided with clear information about the complaint process and their rights.
- First Person Project CIC will ensure that the handling of complaints is in compliance with the GDPR and other relevant data protection laws.

4. Complaint Process

4.1. Informal Resolution

- First Person Project CIC encourages all parties involved to initially resolve their concerns informally, if appropriate and comfortable for them.
- Service users, other services, or members of the general public are encouraged to discuss their complaint directly with the relevant staff member, their immediate supervisor, or another appropriate person within the organization.
- During the informal resolution process, First Person Project CIC will make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant within a reasonable timeframe.
- If the complaint is successfully resolved through informal means, it will be documented for record-keeping and improvement purposes.

4.2. Formal Complaint Submission

- If the complaint remains unresolved through informal means or if the complainant prefers to proceed with a formal complaint, they may choose to submit a written complaint.
- Formal complaints should be submitted in writing, either by email or letter, addressed to the Complaints Officer at First Person Project CIC.
- The written complaint should include details of the incident, names of involved parties, relevant dates, and any supporting documentation or evidence.

- First Person Project CIC will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint within a specified timeframe (5 working days) to provide reassurance that the complaint is being taken seriously.

4.3. Complaint Investigation and Resolution

- The Complaints Officer, designated by First Person Project CIC, will conduct an impartial and thorough investigation of the complaint, regardless of the complainant's identity.
- The Complaints Officer may gather additional information, interview involved parties, review relevant records, and consult with relevant staff or supervisors.
- The investigation will be conducted within a reasonable timeframe, considering the complexity and nature of the complaint, and complainants will be kept informed of the progress.

4.4. Complaint Outcome and Response

- Upon completing the investigation, First Person Project CIC will provide the complainant with a written response detailing the outcome of the investigation and any actions taken or proposed.
- The response will be provided within a specified timeframe (30 working days) from the date of receiving the formal complaint, or as otherwise agreed upon with the complainant.
- If the complaint is substantiated, First Person Project CIC will outline any remedial actions or changes implemented to address the issue and prevent its recurrence.
- If the complaint is not substantiated, the organization will explain its findings and provide clear and transparent reasons for the decision.

5. GDPR Compliance

- First Person Project CIC acknowledges its obligations under the GDPR regarding the processing and protection of personal data.
- All complaints, including those involving personal data, will be handled in compliance with the GDPR's principles and requirements.
- Personal information related to complaints will be processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently, and only for the purpose of addressing and resolving the complaint.
- First Person Project CIC will implement appropriate technical and organizational measures to protect personal data against unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction, as required by the GDPR.
- Complaint records will be securely stored and managed, in accordance with the GDPR's principles of data protection, including confidentiality, integrity, and availability of personal data.

6. Complaints from Other Services and Members of the General Public

- First Person Project CIC recognizes that complaints may arise from other services or members of the general public who interact with the organization.
- Complaints from other services or the general public will be handled in a similar manner as service user complaints, ensuring a fair and impartial investigation process.
- Complaints will be acknowledged, investigated, and responded to within the specified timeframes, providing all parties with clear and transparent communication.

7. Escalation to External Bodies

- If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome or handling of their complaint, they have the right to escalate the matter to external bodies, such as regulatory authorities, ombudsman services, or relevant professional associations.

- First Person Project CIC will provide the complainant with information about relevant external bodies and their contact details if requested.

8. Documentation and Record-Keeping

- First Person Project CIC will maintain clear and accurate records of all complaints received, including the details of the complaint, investigation process, and the outcome.
- Complaint records will be stored securely and in compliance with applicable data protection laws.
- These records will be used to identify patterns, monitor improvements, and support the organization's commitment to continuous learning and development.

9. Training and Continuous Improvement

- First Person Project CIC will provide training to staff and volunteers involved in handling complaints, emphasizing the importance of active listening, empathy, professionalism, and GDPR compliance.
- Regular reviews and evaluations of the complaint process will be conducted to identify areas for improvement and ensure adherence to best practices.

10. Review and Amendments

- This Complaints Procedure will be reviewed as per the review date on the front page, or as needed, to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with applicable laws and regulations, including the GDPR.
- Any amendments or updates to this procedure will be communicated promptly and transparently to staff, volunteers, service users, other services, and members of the general public.

11. Contact Information

- First Person Project CIC will provide clear contact information, including relevant email addresses, phone numbers, or mailing addresses, for complainants to submit formal complaints or seek further information. All relevant contact details are listed on the front page of this policy.

This expanded Service User Complaints Procedure reflects First Person Project CIC's commitment to addressing complaints from various stakeholders in a fair, transparent, and GDPR-compliant manner. It ensures that all complaints are handled with sensitivity, confidentiality, and professionalism, promoting trust, accountability, and continuous improvement within the organization.