



Aurora Foundation for People Abused in Childhood

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

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Job Title	Chief Executive
Version Number	7
Date of Draft	15 June 2018
Approved by	Management Committee
Date Approved	14 June 2017
Review Date	14 June 2019
Circulation	Board of Trustees, Aurora Team

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to highlight the responsibilities and roles of Aurora Foundation for People Abused in Childhood (Aurora) team members to make sure that any vulnerable adults in contact with the organisation are safeguarded and protected from abuse and mistreatment.
- 1.2 The very nature of Aurora's services means that most of its clients have already experienced some form of abuse or trauma, and as a result of their experiences may be vulnerable to further abuse. The term vulnerable adult in this document therefore refers to Aurora clients only.
- 1.3 The policy aims to ensure that any team members raising a concern that a client is being abused or neglected is taken very seriously and it is acted on promptly and appropriately. It confirms the priority Aurora gives to safeguarding adults and outlines the principles and definitions that underpin this work.
- 1.4 The policy affirms the determination of Aurora to ensure that:
 - people using our services are safe;
 - help is extended where needed to support those experiencing abuse and neglect in their own homes by making relevant external agencies aware, and wherever possible in collaboration with the client concerned.
- 1.5 By defining different kinds of abuse and outlining what should happen when confronted with possible abuse, this policy sets out an agreed procedure to be followed. This will help to clarify the safeguarding responsibilities of all team members working with clients.
- 1.6 Aurora is committed to supporting team members who raise concerns about the treatment of clients.
- 1.7 In line with No Secrets (DOH, 2000), a vulnerable adult is defined as:

"a person aged 18 years or over who is in receipt of or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 Aurora is a registered charity working to make a difference to the lives of people abused in childhood. To uphold these aims Aurora places a very high priority on the health, safety and welfare of all clients in contact with Aurora services.
- 2.2 Aurora and its team members have a collective and individual responsibility and a duty of care to ensure that team members fulfil their responsibilities to prevent abuse of clients and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- 2.3 Aurora will advise team members and clients of the existence of, and can have access to, its Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.
- 2.4 Aurora will ensure that team members have access to, and be expected to adhere to, its Team Members' Code of Conduct and Ethics (Appendix B).

- 2.5 Aurora will advise clients about the standard of behaviour and conduct they can expect from all team members. Clients will be advised what to do if they experience or suspect abuse via procedures outlined in the leaflet "Complaints Procedure for Clients" (Appendix C).
- 2.6 Aurora will work when necessary with appropriate local agencies, to ensure that clients are safeguarded through the effective operation of Aurora's Vulnerable Adult Policy.
- 2.7 Aurora recognises that any clients can be subject to abuse and all allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with Aurora procedures.
- 2.8 Aurora recognises and affirms that it is the responsibility of all team members to act upon any concern about a client no matter how small or trivial it may seem.
- 2.9 Aurora recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review the procedures that are designed to prevent or notify suspected abuse of clients.
- 2.10 Aurora requires all its team members to follow the Code of Conduct and will draw the attention of team members to this code of conduct and related procedures in induction and relevant training.
- 2.11 Aurora is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with, or who come into contact with clients and providing appropriate supervision.

3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 This policy is based on the following principles:
 - Everyone has the right to live their lives free from fear, violence or harm;
 - Everyone has the right to protection from mistreatment and abuse;
 - Everyone has the right to live an independent lifestyle and to make choices even if some of those choices involve a degree of risk.
- 3.2 In recognition of this Aurora is committed to ensuring that:
 - We take action when abuse is suspected;
 - We increase awareness and recognition of the issues involved;
 - All vulnerable clients can access and receive support so they can lead safe lives;
 - We work collaboratively to prevent the mistreatment of vulnerable citizens.
- 3.3 The endorsement and implementation of the procedures and guidance serves important functions by:
 - Bringing issues of abuse or exploitation out into the open in collaboration with Aurora clients;
 - Providing a consistent approach and a framework of accountability;
 - Encouraging attitudes and practices that help to create a responsive atmosphere in which individuals can feel secure and valued;
 - Reminding team members of the importance of not allowing their own ethical or moral beliefs to intrude into their professional practice and of not imposing their own values and standards on their clients or colleagues;
 - Reinforcing the rights of clients;

- Responding to concerns and allegations in a considered and proportional manner;
- Empowering clients by involving them as fully as possible in all situations.
- Ensuring team members share information within legal and ethical constraints to safeguard adults.
- Respecting equal opportunities, anti-discriminatory practice and diversity issues.
- Ensuring team members receive induction and training appropriate to their role and in line with national standards.
- Ensuring significant cases are reviewed and subsequent learning is acted on by all relevant parties.

4. WHAT IS MEANT BY SAFEGUARDING ADULTS?

- 4.1 Safeguarding adults means all work which enables an adult to retain independence, well-being and choice and live a life that is free from abuse and neglect. It is about preventing abuse and neglect as well as promoting good practice for responding to concerns with other voluntary or statutory agencies.
- 4.2 All people have the right to live their lives free from violence and abuse. The right is underpinned by the duty on public agencies under the Human Rights Act (1988). This means that any adult at risk of abuse or neglect should be able to access public organisations for appropriate support or interventions to stop abuse or neglect.
- 4.3 It follows that all clients should have access to relevant services including the civil and criminal justice system and victim support services such as Aurora. Remedies available should also include measures that achieve behaviour change by those who have perpetrated abuse or neglect.
- 4.4 It also follows that Aurora has a duty to ensure that its clients should be free from abuse and neglect whilst receiving care and support from Aurora team members.

5. WHAT IS ABUSE?

- 5.1 No Secrets (DOH, 2000) describes abuse as “a violation of individuals human and civil rights by any other person or persons”
- 5.2 It also highlights the main forms of abuse as:
- **Physical abuse**, including hitting, slapping, pushing, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions
 - **Sexual abuse**, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the individual has not consented, or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting
 - **Psychological abuse**, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
 - **Financial or material abuse**, including theft, fraud, exploitation pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
 - **Neglect and acts of omission**, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
 - **Discriminatory abuse**, including racist, sexist, that based on a person’s disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment
- 5.3 An individual, group or an organisation may perpetrate abuse.

6. INTERVENING TO PROTECT THE ADULT

- 6.1 Any intervention to protect an adult must be carried out with the consent of the adult concerned, unless they are unable to give consent or their consent is over-ridden by Aurora’s duty to protect others.
- 6.2 All interventions must be:
- Lawful.
 - Proportionate to the risk.
 - Respectful of the wishes of the person at risk.
- 6.3 Interventions to prevent the abuse of one person by another should always consider reducing risk by addressing the behaviour of the people causing the abuse, as well as by decreasing any vulnerability of the victim due to individual or environmental factors.

- 6.4 Where an adult lacks the capacity to safeguard themselves, other people will need to make those decisions. In doing so they will:
- Act in a way that is necessary to promote the client’s health or well-being or to prevent deterioration to their quality of life.
 - Ensure that an appropriate level of safety is provided for a client if an intervention is put in place.
 - Ensure that the ascertainable past and present wishes and feelings of the clients concerned are taken into account. And that those wishes were not made as a result of undue influence.
 - Ensure that the clients is encouraged and supported to the fullest extent possible to participate in any decision made which affects them.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Aurora Foundation for People Abused in Childhood (Aurora)

Aurora has a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that its clients are protected against abuse and mistreatment. The overall responsibility for the policy is with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO, see Appendix A) of Aurora and it is Aurora’s responsibility to:

- implement a range of safeguarding commitments, including safe recruitment practices and Criminal Record Checks (See Appendix A).
- ensure all necessary procedures and practices are in place to provide adequate protection for clients (See Appendix A).

7.2 Board of Trustees

The Trustee Board is to approve the policy and subsequent revisions and to have an awareness of the issues relating to equal opportunities.

7.3 Aurora Team

All Team members have responsibilities under the Policy. Team members have a responsibility to:

- personally uphold the Aurora Team Code of Conduct and Ethics (Appendix B); be aware of the complaints procedures for clients as outlined in the leaflet “Complaints Procedure for Clients” (Appendix C);
- be aware of abuse as an issue and to alert the DSO of any concerns, suspicions or allegations of abuse;
- maintain a client’s safety and well-being at all times. Securing their immediate safety where possible and ensuring immediate medical attention;
- ensure their duty to alert overrides any desire to keep a confidence;
- make clear and detailed written records when abuse is disclosed, witnessed or alleged.

8. PROCEDURES FOR AURORA TEAM

- 8.1 Report the incident or allegation to the DSO straight away. If you are not able to contact the DSO for any reason contact a Management Committee Member (MCM). If a team member suspects the DSO or MCM of abuse or have concerns about their practices or behaviour towards a client, these concerns must be discussed with another MCM and reported to the Chair of Trustees if appropriate. If necessary, the Aurora Disciplinary Procedure (Appendix D) will be enforced.
- 8.2 If the DSO or MCM is not available then inform whoever is in the office or building at the time to discuss your concerns. A message can be left on the confidential answering machine, which is located in a private office.
- 8.3 The objectives of an adult abuse investigation will be to:
- establish matters of fact
 - assess the needs of the clients for protection, support and redress
 - decide what sanctions are necessary with regard to the perpetrator
 - decide what action should be taken if the service or its management have been culpable, ineffective or negligent.
- 8.4 If a client comes to you with a report of apparent abuse, you should listen carefully to him/her, using the following guidelines. When listening to the client a team member must:
- allow the client to speak without interruption;
 - never trivialise or exaggerate the issue;
 - never make suggestions;
 - never coach or lead the client in any way;
 - reassure the client, let them know you are glad they have spoken up and that they are right to do so;
 - always ask enough questions to clarify your understanding, but do not probe or interrogate – no matter how well you know the client – spare them having to repeat themselves over and over;
 - be honest- let the client know that you cannot keep this a secret, you will need to tell someone else;
 - try to remain calm – remember this is not an easy thing for them to do;
 - do not show your emotions – if you show anger, disgust or disbelief, they may stop talking. This may be because they feel they are upsetting you or they may feel your negative feelings are directed towards them;
 - let the client know that you are taking the matter very seriously;
 - make the client feel secure and safe without causing them any further anxiety.

- 8.5 Particular attention must be given to:
- The person's ability to give meaningful consent
 - Any communication issues
 - Any issues to their culture, race or religion
 - Any support needs the person may need either as a result of the incident, or the process.
- 8.6 Where a case of serious abuse of a client has been alleged, if the alleged abuser is a team member of Aurora consideration will be given to precautionary suspension of the alleged abuser to enable the investigation to proceed.
- 8.7 An individual who is going to be suspended must be formally advised of this by a CEO and has the right to be accompanied or represented at this meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague as appropriate.
- 8.8 The DSO will be responsible for recording essential information about each case and for collecting reports and notes as appropriate.
- 8.9 Any detailed information about a case will be confined to the DSO, MCM (if not involved in the allegations) and any relative, but where a referral to an external agency is to be made the DSO will advise the Chair of Trustees.
- 8.10 The team member reporting the allegations will be kept informed of the progress of the case on a 'need to know' basis.
- 8.11 The decision to proceed with further action should take account of such factors as:-
- The vulnerability of the person;
 - Who is the alleged perpetrator;
 - The nature and extent of the abuse;
 - The length of time it has been occurring;
 - The risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts involving other vulnerable people;
 - The wishes of the client.
- 8.12 It is also important that an early decision is taken about which agencies should be involved, how and when.
- 8.13 Taking into account all the information available, the DSO will decide on the next steps, which may include taking no further action. Where the DSO decides that further action is necessary, this may be to:
- Seek further advice from the Chair of Trustees
 - Report the matter to the police if a crime is suspected
- 8.14 If the person reporting a concern about a client does not agree with a decision of the DSO that no further action is necessary, the person should refer this concern in the first instance to the Chair of Trustees. If the Chair of Trustees does not recommend further action and the team member still has concerns, then the team member has the right and duty to refer the case directly to the police.
- 8.15 A client may accuse a team member of physical, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory abuse or neglect. Any instance of a client being abused by a team member is particularly serious. On the other hand for an innocent person to be accused of such an act is a serious ordeal which can result in long term damage to their health and career.

- 8.16 In the event that any team member suspects any other team member of abusing a client, it is their responsibility to bring these concerns to the DSO.
- 8.17 If a decision is made to pursue an allegation of abuse by a team member, this will be dealt with under Aurora's Disciplinary Procedure (Appendix D).
- 8.18 Any actions resulting from investigations will be monitored by the MCM who will report to the DSO and the Board of Trustees.
- 8.19 For proper investigation and monitoring of abuse it is important that a record is kept of any part of a procedure carried out to alert, report or investigate whether unsubstantiated or not.
- 8.20 These records are also important in the identification of abuse where it may be necessary to build up a picture from fragments of relevant information over time by recalling information of previous alerting.
- 8.21 Managers should hold this information confidentially although team members should be aware of what should be recorded when abuse is suspected, who holds such records and who has access to them.

APPENDIX A. FULFILLING AURORA'S SAFEGUARDING OBLIGATIONS

1. In order to fulfil its commitment to ensure good working practice in protecting vulnerable adults Aurora will undertake the following:

- **Management Commitment:** the Management Committee is committed to the importance of safeguarding and promoting Aurora's Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adult's Policy. Aurora's Designated Safeguarding Officer (see below) will be a member of the Management Committee and the Committee will receive updates on safeguarding matters.
- **Cascading the Policy:** This Policy sets out a clear statement of the Aurora's responsibilities. It will be made available to all team members. The Management Committee will ensure that all team members have read, understood and signed for receipt of a copy of this Policy.
- **Shaping services:** All consultations affecting clients will be undertaken using methods that are accessible and appropriate. The views of clients will be taken into account when shaping services that affect them.
- **Safe recruitment practices:** Aurora will adopt safe recruitment practices to reduce the likelihood of recruiting unsuitable team members. This includes ensuring that a statement about Aurora's commitment to safeguarding is included in all recruitment and selection materials including reference to regular DBS checks. Satisfactory explanations for any gaps in employment will be sought. References will always be obtained direct from the referee, never through the applicant. Appropriate levels of Disclosure and Barring Service checks will be obtained.

2. Responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Officer at Aurora:

- The Designated Safeguarding Officer at Aurora is the first point of contact for all team members to go to for advice if they are concerned about a client
- They are responsible for ensuring that Aurora's safeguarding policy is kept up to date
- They ensure that Aurora complies with safe recruitment procedures for new team members and their induction
- They support team members with information regarding concerns and support decision making about whether team member concerns are sufficient enough to notify the Management Committee or whether other courses of action are more appropriate, for example notifying the Board of Trustees
- They ensure that concerns are logged and stored securely
- They have joint responsibility with the management committee or Board of Trustees to ensure that the organisation's safeguarding policy and related policies and procedures are followed and regularly updated;
- They are responsible for promoting a safe environment for clients.

3. Aurora's Designated Safeguarding Officer

Name: Nick Gauntlett
Email: ngauntlett@aurorafoundation.org.uk
Telephone: 020 8541 1951 / 07766 018926

Date: 12 June 2017

APPENDIX B. AURORA TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

AURORA TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

All practitioners have a responsibility to provide a high quality care service to clients and will ascribe to, and be governed by, an Ethical Framework for Good Practice from a professional body within their own discipline.

In addition to these frameworks Aurora has its own client care and ethical considerations that team members need to follow. Violation of these care and ethical considerations may lead to the Aurora Disciplinary Procedure, and at worst termination of the contract.

CLIENT CARE

1. Treat all Aurora clients with respect and dignity.
2. Protect the rights of all Aurora clients.
3. Resolve questions and concerns identified by clients with reference to Aurora's Management Committee (MC) as required, and if unable to find a resolution then refer to MC.
4. Important changes to the existing therapeutic relationship must be discussed with the Aurora Clinical Supervisor before any action is taken. Any changes to be made are to be done on his/her advice and with a clear plan of action.
5. All clients are Aurora Clients, and in the event of team members leaving the client will be allocated to another therapist as appropriate.
6. Maintain confidential records of client contacts by recording all pertinent therapeutic interactions with clients and storing in the confidential and locked filing cabinets in Aurora.
7. All practitioners MUST enter client appointments in the diary in advance of the session.
8. All practitioners are responsible for ensuring the therapy room is left tidy and clean in readiness for the next therapy session.
9. All practitioners must advise their Clinical Supervisor of any absences to individual and group supervision.
10. Provide services that are in keeping with Aurora's Policies and Procedures.

AURORA TEAM ETHICS

1. Place the welfare and safety of the clients in matters affecting them above all other concerns.
2. Safeguard information about a client once it has been obtained. Treat as confidential and privileged information any information relating to client care.
3. Do not deliberately do harm to an individual served, either physically or psychologically, do not verbally assault, do not ridicule, do not attempt to subjugate or endanger individuals served or allow other individuals served or team members to do so.
4. Urge changes in the lives of clients only in the interest of promoting recovery and avoid making interventions that have no therapeutic value.
5. Remain aware of personal skills and limitations. Be willing to recognize when it is in the best interest of clients to terminate the therapeutic relationship or to refer to another service or individual.
6. Do not engage in any activity that could be construed as exploitation of clients or other team members, be it sexual, financial, or social.
7. Avoid any relationship with a client that might look as if you are using your position as an employee to influence a client for personal gain or to satisfy your emotional needs.
8. Show regard for the social codes and moral expectations of the community in which you work, recognizing that violations of accepted moral and legal standards may involve clients or colleagues in damaging personal conflicts and injure their own name and the reputation of Aurora.
9. Do not derive material personal benefits from having transacted business on behalf of Aurora other than those conferred directly by the organisation.
10. Accept responsibility for continuing education and professional development as part of the organisation's commitment to providing a quality service.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR CLIENTS

STAGE 1: HOW DO I COMPLAIN?

- Most difficulties can usually be settled informally at an early stage by talking directly with the therapist/counsellor and/or team member concerned. We would hope that this would resolve the issue, e.g. by clarifying aspects of the therapy/counselling process or by discussing your concerns in detail.
- We hope that most complaints about your therapy and/or other issues at Aurora can be resolved quickly and informally in this way, and encourage you to discuss your complaint directly with the person involved, as this is often the easiest and most effective way to put things right.
- However, a complaint concerning therapeutic misconduct where an individual therapist has led a client to make a serious complaint is taken very seriously at Aurora. Immediate action will be taken which may include the suspension of said therapist whilst investigations are taking place.

STAGE 2: WHAT IF I AM STILL NOT SATISFIED?

- If resolution is not possible or if you decline to speak directly to the therapist/counsellor/team member - and you wish to continue with your complaint - a formal letter to the Management Committee is required. Once this is received, the Management Committee will be responsible for ensuring that the therapist/counsellor and/or team member is told of your complaint and invited to respond.
- The Committee may also refer to the Aurora Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure to ensure your complaint is carefully considered with direction from the Management Committee and the Board of Trustees.
- Using this Procedure the Management Committee will endeavour to address your concerns and if required, provide you with an explanation and discuss any further action as deemed necessary.
- Please note that since Aurora is also a Therapeutic Community client confidentiality rests within the Aurora Team as a whole and not with an individual therapist/counsellor and/or team member.
- Should a complaint be brought directly by someone acting on your behalf your written formal consent is required before the matter can be discussed with the third party.

STAGE 3: CAN I TAKE MY COMPLAINT FURTHER?

- If you are dissatisfied with the Management Committee's response to your complaint you can make an appeal to them in writing stating your reasons.
- If you remain dissatisfied with this final reply you are at liberty to seek legal advice and proceed accordingly.

APPENDIX D. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1. Every member of the Aurora Team is subject to the disciplinary and complaints procedure.
2. Any complaint received verbally, electronically or in writing against a therapist will be verbally acknowledged by a member of the Management Committee and recorded in a Complaints Register. If in the event no formal written complaint is made the entry in the Complaints Register will be erased see 4. below.
3. The team member will be informed immediately in writing that a complaint has been lodged and advised of the general nature of the complaint based on the information available at the time. The member may offer an explanation at that time or wait until a formal detailed complaint has been lodged.
4. A member of the Management Committee will request that the complainant put the complaint in writing giving adequate details of the complaint against the therapist, together with such supporting evidence as may be available. Immediately the formal complaint is documented in sufficient detail, a copy of the formal written complaint will be sent to the therapist who is the subject of the complaint requesting agreement or rebuttal within 21 days. At the same time, the person lodging the complaint will be sent written confirmation that the complaint is being investigated.
5. At the same time as 4. above, the Chairperson of the Management Committee will be provided with a copy of the formal complaint.
6. On receipt of the reply by the team member who is the subject of the complaint, the Chairperson of the Management Committee in consultation with one or more qualified members of Team will determine if there is a case to be answered. Aurora may take disciplinary action against the therapist if in its opinion the therapist has conducted her/him self in any way against the Aurora Team Code of Conduct (See Appendix A). Such disciplinary action will follow the procedures herein set out.
7. Criminal proceedings. In the event that in the opinion of the Chairperson of the Management Committee in consultation with one or more members of the Team the matter complained of is in the nature of a criminal act or omission the complainant will be advised to contact her/his local police authority and the member will be so informed. If the police or the Crown Prosecution Service (or other similar statutory organisations overseas) have laid actual criminal charges against a therapist, Aurora will forthwith suspend the contract with the therapist pending the outcome. Regardless of the outcome Aurora may still take disciplinary action against the therapist if in Aurora's opinion the therapist has conducted her/him self in any way against the Code of Conduct. Such disciplinary action will follow the procedures herein set out.
8. If there is a case to be answered the Chairperson of the Management Committee will consult with one or more members of the Team and within 28 days of the decision to proceed make its findings known to the complainant and the member in writing.
9. If it is decided there is no case to answer, the person making the complaint will be informed in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision. The person making the complaint will have the right to appeal against the decision and the complaints procedure will then continue.

10. The Management Committee may call/consult with witnesses, who may include the person making the complaint and/or the member who is the subject of the complaint. Additionally the person bringing the complaint and the member who is the subject of the complaint, have the right to provide a full written explanation of all the circumstances. In cases deemed by the Chairperson of the Management Committee to be of a particularly serious nature the complainant and the member may be invited to give personal evidence if they wish to do so and each may be accompanied by a friend or adviser. All costs of attending any such meeting(s) shall fall to the parties.
11. Having considered the complaint and the member's reply, the Management Committee will within 14 days, submit a written report and decision which will be copied to the complainant and the member.
12. All decisions of the Management Committee must be reported to the Board of Trustees at its next meeting. The Board of Trustees shall not have the power to overturn any decision (other than through the process of the Appeals Committee – set out below) but may advise the Management Committee of its views.
13. Team members in breach of the Code of Conduct are liable to expulsion from Aurora and termination of their contract or agreement or such lesser action as considered appropriate by the Management Committee in the general form of suspension from practice of any or all therapies. Any abuse of a patient/client will result in automatic expulsion.
14. A member found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct by the Management Committee has the right of appeal. Notice of appeal to be received in writing at Aurora offices within 14 days of the written decision as in 11 above.
15. The name of any member expelled from Aurora will be advised to any other professional association to which the member is believed to belong.
16. In the event the complaint is withdrawn at any time, the therapists will be immediately informed and, subject to clause 7 above, the complaint will have no significance on the member's record.