



Comments, Compliments and Complaints - Policy / Procedure

KEY INFORMATION

Policy prepared, reviewed or amended by:	James Beardsworth, Corporate Services Manager
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Next Review Date	March 2028
Updated	

Introduction

Age UK Bolton is committed to ensuring our work is of the highest quality. This policy and procedure has been established so that all customer Comments, Compliments and Complaints are reported to a central point, monitored and recorded in a standard format.

We welcome Comments, Compliments and Complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services.

Age UK Bolton believe that through effective management and investigation of Comments, Compliments and Complaints, we can identify learning to achieve high quality work and continuous improvement as an organisation.

The following principles underpin Age UK Bolton's approach to handling Comments, Compliments and Complaints:

- The procedure is accessible to all regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, belief or sexual orientation
- The procedure is fair, easy and as transparent as possible
- Making a complaint will not harm or prejudice the service that is given to the complainant
- Ensuring that all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner
- Complainants are treated with respect and receive appropriate support throughout the handling of the complaint

Comments

Definition of a comment: a remark, observation or criticism that may require immediate action but does not require a full investigation. Let us know your thoughts on what Age UK Bolton could do better. We will record the details of all comments received and then pass them onto the Department concerned so they can look at how improvements can be made.

Compliments

A compliment is any expression of praise or congratulations. We really appreciate it when people take the time to tell us when things have gone well. It is important for Age UK Bolton to celebrate success and continue provide quality services.

If the compliment is about an individual member of staff, they are informed in writing by their Line Manager and a copy of the compliment letter is stored in their personal file.

Complaints

Definition of a complaint: a statement that something is unsatisfactory; this can be a verbal or written statement.

We will do our very best to correct mistakes and address your concerns in a way that is satisfactory for you. If you have a resolution to your complaint in mind, then please let us know when you contact us. We want to reach the best possible conclusion for all involved.

We know that there may be times when we do not meet our own high standards and, if this does happen, we want to hear about it, deal with the situation as quickly as possible and put measures

in place to stop it happening again.

Complaints process

Stage 1 (informal complaint)

- In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.
- If you do not know who to contact or do not wish to contact the individual involved, please contact us via our website <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/bolton/about-us/contact-us/> and complete the online form or email enquiries@ageukbolton.org.uk
- If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- Complaints should be acknowledged and responded to by the person handling the complaint within five working days of receipt. The acknowledgement should indicate who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.
- In order for us to resolve your complaint to the best of our ability, please include as much detail as possible regarding your complaint, including any relevant communications or documentation.
- Ideally, complainants should receive a definitive reply within seven working days.
- Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.
- In the event that the complainant chooses not to escalate the complaint further, or fails to respond in relation to any proposed action put forward by the organisation, the complaint will be considered to have been resolved. A record of the complaint will be maintained for a period of three years from the date of dispatch of the resolution / decision letter.

Stage 2 (formally registering a complaint)

- If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage 1, or you would prefer your complaint to be formally investigated, you can request your complaint to be escalated to Stage 2, either through your contact at Stage 1 or directly through our website or email
- The person who receives Stage 2 complaints may investigate the facts of the case themselves, or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage 1.
- If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

- The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage 1 should be kept informed of what is happening.
- Complainants should receive a definitive reply within a reasonable time given the circumstances, and should be kept notified of the progress of the investigation and provided with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and told that appropriate action has been taken as a result of the complaint.
- In the event that the complainant chooses not to escalate the complaint further, or fails to respond in relation to any proposed action put forward by the Organisation, the complaint will be considered to have been resolved. A record of the complaint will be maintained for a period of three years from the date of dispatch of the resolution / decision letter.

Stage 3 (appeal)

- If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 2, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chief Executive or, in the event that the Chief Executive was dealing with the complaint at Stage 2, it will go to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within ten working days of receipt. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.
- The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the type of complaints that the Commission can involve itself with can be found on the Commission's website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx