

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy overview

This policy is organised into the following sections:

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1. Context

Age UK Ealing (AUKE) considers complaints as opportunities to learn and to improve the services it provides, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

We recognise that we provide advice, information and services to individuals who are frequently isolated and vulnerable, and that these individuals are further marginalised if their views and complaints cannot be heard and properly taken into account.

We also recognise the importance of volunteers to the services we provide and wish to ensure that comments and feedback made by volunteers are properly considered and taken into account. Matters or concerns can be raised with a volunteer's manager at their regular supervision meetings or at any other time – this is an important way to address issues before they develop the potential to become complaints. Also, the CEO operates informal 'drop in' and annual involvement meetings with volunteers– these meetings can also be an appropriate place to raise minor concerns or suggestions.

Complaints are valuable feedback and will help AUKE improve its services and remain accountable to the older people we serve.

2. Policy statement

AUKE strives to:

- provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- ensure that people are aware of this procedure and know who to contact and how to make a complaint
- make sure that AUKE staff, and also volunteers, know what to do if a complaint is received

- make sure all complaints are investigated fairly, promptly and consistently
- handle complaint information courteously and sensitively, telling only those who need to know, maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and observing AUKE Data Protection Policy and Procedures
- make sure that complaints are resolved wherever possible and that good relationships with complainants are established
- treat complaints as feedback to help AUKE improve

3. Definitions

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about AUKE, whether justified or not.

It may come from any volunteer, individual or organisation that has a legitimate interest in AUKE if something appears to be improper.

A complaint can be made verbally, over the phone, by email or in writing.

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for this policy. Day to day supervision and implementation of the policy rests with the CEO. This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

4. How to make a complaint

Complaints may be made in writing to:

The CEO/Chair of Trustees (*marking the envelope 'Strictly Confidential' if appropriate*)
 Age UK Ealing
 Greenford Community Centre
 170 Oldfield Lane South
 Greenford
 UB6 9JS

Or by phone: 020 8567 8017

Or by email: reception@ageukealing.org.uk or greenford@ageukealing.org.uk

Or made in person to any member of AUKE staff or any trustee.

AUKE is a charity registered in England and Wales – complaints may also be made to the Charities Commission: www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity

5. What to do if you receive a complaint

- Write down the facts
- Take the complainant's name and contact details
- Be especially sensitive to any difficulties a person may have in expressing a complaint, for example if the complainant has a disability or struggles with the English language
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to AUKE (service user, carer, volunteer etc)
- Tell the complainant that AUKE has a Complaints Procedure and offer a copy if appropriate
- Explain what will happen next and when (see guidance below)
- If appropriate, ask the complainant to confirm the complaint in writing

6. Complaints procedure

Stage 1

The complaint should be logged and the volunteer supervisor/Manager/CEO advised, as appropriate. Many complaints are best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. The matter should therefore be referred to (as appropriate) to:

- the Volunteer's Co-Ordinator (if by a volunteer) to, or to
- the Head of Services for Information & Advice and Befriending or to
- the Day Centre Manager or to
- the Finance Manager or to
- the Marketing, Communications and Fundraising Manager or to
- the Business Support Manager or to
- the AUKE CEO

If the complaint refers to a particular person, they should be contacted by the person the complaint is referred to and asked to respond.

The complaint should be acknowledged within 5 working days. The complainant should be told who is investigating, when they can expect a response (ideally within 14 days) and they should also be provided with a copy of this policy.

Whether or not the complaint is justified, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate, the conclusions, and any action taken.

Stage 2

If the complainant feels that their complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Chief Executive or by the Board of Trustees if Stage 1 was dealt with by the Chief Executive.

The complaint should be acknowledged within 5 working days. The complainant should be told who is investigating, when they can expect a response (ideally within 14 days)

The person who investigated at Stage 1 should be involved and kept informed.

Whether or not the complaint is upheld, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate, the conclusions, and any action taken. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

This stage of the procedure may be varied by the Board as appropriate – for example to avoid a conflict of interest.

7. Monitoring and learning

Age UK Ealing is committed to providing an excellent service to all and to learning from all situations in which we do not provide the best possible service. In order to do this, we will:

- Record and monitor complaints so that organisational learning takes place from the handling of any complaints that there may be, and in determining consequent changes or improvements

- Report to the Board at least annually on the nature and number of complaints received including how and the stage that they were resolved

The CEO is responsible for implementing any changes to processes or procedures that are highlighted by any complaints. The aim here is to ensure that AUKE can demonstrate how it learns from such feedback, and also to ensure that similar complaints are not made in the future.

The CEO is responsible for supporting staff who may be the subject of complaints and for implementing any training or supervision that will enable the staff member in question to learn from the process and develop their skills and experience.

See Appendix 1 – Complaint Process Flow Chart – How to make a complaint.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

RP updated February 2024

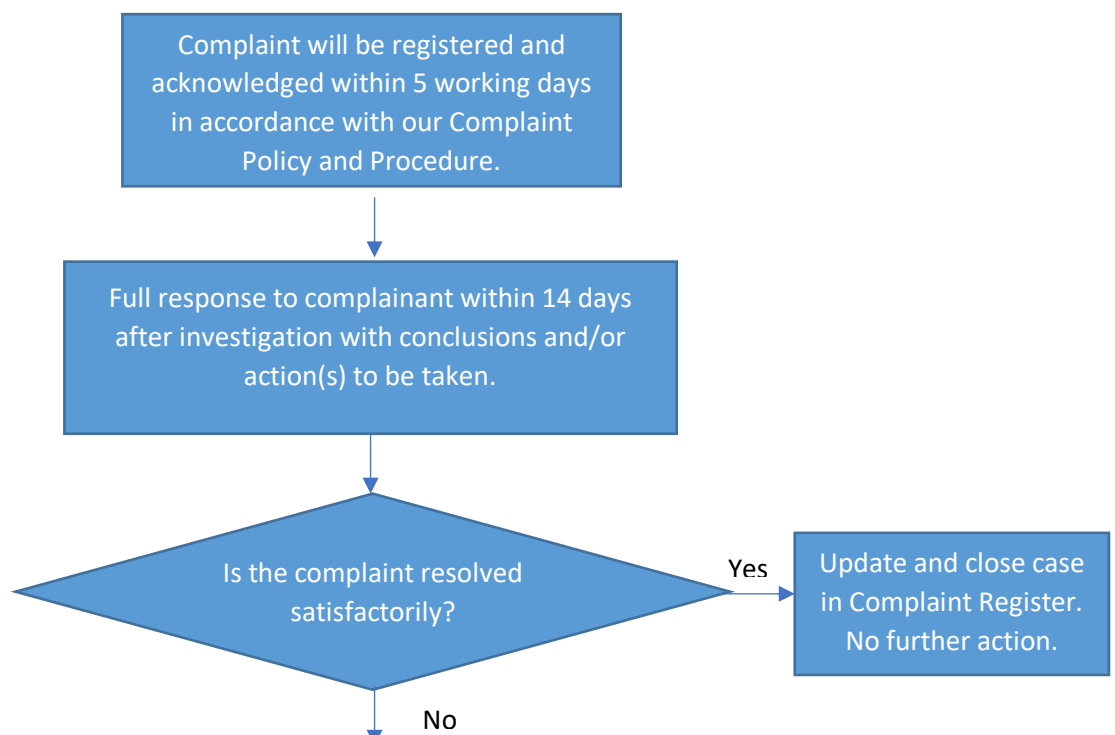
COMPLAINT PROCESS FLOW CHART

How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint to any members of Age UK Ealing Staff or CEO/Chair of Board of Trustees by:

- phone
- email
- in person
- meeting

STAGE 1



STAGE 2

