

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

Although Age UK Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) and all of its staff aim to provide information, services and support in a friendly and effective manner, there are times when things go wrong. This complaints policy and procedure helps us to deal with the concerns of our users in a consistent way, to identify areas in which new policies might be developed and to improve the overall quality of our service and support.

The policy and procedure is intended to be easy to use, speedy, fair and friendly.

2. What can the complaint be about?

Complaints can cover any aspect of the work of Age UK B&NES including:

- Any activity undertaken by Age UK B&NES
- Any service provided by Age UK B&NES
- The conduct of any staff employed by, or working on behalf of Age UK B&NES and Age UK B&NES trustees and volunteers.

3. Associated Documents/Legal Requirements

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

4. Who can complain?

The procedure can be used by a person or organisation to make a complaint about Age UK B&NES, its services, trustees, staff or volunteers.

5. The Procedure for Dealing With Complaints

The Informal Process

It is hoped that in most instances the complaint can be dealt with at an informal level. The informal process will comprise either:

- An email or written complaint which will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt and be passed to the most appropriate person, usually the manager responsible for the relevant area of work, Or:
- A face to face or telephone complaint which will, wherever possible, be dealt with by the person receiving the information. If it is more appropriate for it to be passed to a colleague then that person will seek to resolve it within 10 working days.

During this informal process, the complainant will be informed that a formal complaint process exists and, if he or she requests it, will be given a copy of the policy and procedure. The person dealing with the complainant will seek to resolve it on an informal basis within 10 working days of receipt. In all cases, details of the complaint and the outcome will be recorded using a Complaints Spreadsheet (stored and encrypted on the general drive; see Appendix for an example), and the Chief Executive will be notified.

The Formal Process

If the complainant is either unhappy with the outcome of the informal process or wishes to make a formal complaint, then the formal complaint must be in writing marked “Confidential” and addressed to:

The Chief Executive
Age UK B&NES
18 Kingsmead Square
BATH
BA1 2AE

in the case of a complaint directly concerning the Chief Executive, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Age UK Bath & N.E. Somerset marked strictly private and confidential.

An acknowledgement of the complaint will be sent within 3 working days of receipt. The complainant will be reassured that the complaint will not affect their continued access to Age UK B&NES services. The Chief Executive will investigate the complaint and write a report normally within 15 working days and, at a maximum, within 25 working days of receipt of the complaint. The Chief Executive will also inform the Board of Trustees of the complaint. A full response will be forwarded by the Chief Executive to the complainant within 25 working days of receipt of the complaint. If the Chief Executive is the subject of the complaint the Chair will oversee the above process.

Review

If the formal process is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, they may ask for a review. The request for a review must be in writing and addressed to the Chair of Age UK B&NES at the Chief Executive's Office. An acknowledgement of the request will be sent within 3 working days of receipt.

The review will be undertaken by the Chair of Age UK B&NES, supported at his/her discretion by the other officers if this is acceptable to both parties. If not acceptable to the complainant, the review would be undertaken by the Chair and two Trustees acceptable to both parties.

The decision of the Chair will be forwarded directly to the complainant and will be final.

MONITORING THE PROCEDURE

The Complaints Procedure, together with the complaints received and the outcomes will be reviewed.

All users of Age UK B&NES service will be informed that a complaints procedure is in place should they need to make a complaint at any time.

CHARITY COMMISSION

If you are unhappy with the way Age UK BANES deals with a complaint, you can contact the Charity Commission.

APPENDIX

Please see overleaf for an example of the Complaints Spreadsheet kept on the general drive:

