

# Complaints Policy & Procedure

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| <b>Name of Policy:</b>  | <b>Complaints Policy &amp; Procedure</b>   |
| <b>Scope of Policy:</b> | <p>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.</p> |
| <b>Version:</b>         | v0.2   |

# COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

## 1. Introduction

Although **Age UK Bath & North East Somerset** its staff and volunteers 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. Associated Documents/Legal Requirements

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

## 3. Who does the policy apply to?

Complaints can cover any aspect of the work of **Age UK Bath & North East Somerset** including:

- Any activity undertaken by **Age UK Bath & North East Somerset**
- Any service provided by **Age UK Bath & North East Somerset**
- The conduct of any Trustees, staff and volunteers of **Age UK Bath & North East Somerset** and contractors working on our behalf

## 4. What is the Age UK Bath & North East Somerset policy?

### Who can complain?

The procedure can be used by a person or organisation to make a complaint about **Age UK Bath & North East Somerset**, its services, trustees, staff or volunteers.

## 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 Sharepoint) 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 Bath & North East Somerset

The Studio,  
Alexander House  
James Street West  
Bath  
BA1 2BT

In the case of a complaint directly concerning the Chief Executive, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of **Age UK Bath & North East 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 Bath & North East Somerset** 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 Bath & North East Somerset 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 Bath & North East Somerset, 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 every 3 years.

All users of Age UK Bath & North East Somerset 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 Bath & North East Somerset deals with a complaint, you can contact the Charity Commission.

## 5. Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

The **Board of Trustees** has formally approved the Complaints Policy & Procedure and are responsible for its top-level commitment.

**Senior Managers** are responsible for establishing a culture where the Complaints Policy & Procedure is promoted. Senior Managers will ensure that all aspects of the Complaints Policy & Procedure are applied appropriately and that their behaviours/actions demonstrate the commitment to the policy and learning from Complaints.

**Employees and Volunteers** are responsible at all times for their own conduct, behaviour and ensuring that they work at all times legally and ethically. All staff members should ensure that they read, understand and act within the guidance set out in this Complaints Policy and share it with anyone who wishes to make a complaint.

## 6. Equalities Statement

**Age UK Bath & North East Somerset** commits itself to fairness and equality for all, operating with professionalism, integrity and openness. Throughout our policies and practice, we aim to make sure we do not knowingly create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, directly or indirectly. Employees must embrace this commitment.

Volunteers/employees should ensure that no person or group of people receiving services from or applying for accommodation, employment or contracts with **Age UK Bath & North East Somerset**, will be treated less favourably than any other person or group of people because of their gender (and including gender reassignment), sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion or belief, political beliefs, disability, age, class, responsibility for dependents, part time or shift workers, unrelated criminal offences or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

## **7. Where can I find further advice and guidance on this policy?**

Please contact your Line Manager or HR Officer should you wish to discuss any matters relating to the policy or procedure