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## AGE UK BEXLEY POLICY/PROCEDURE: Complaints

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### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Age UK Bexley is committed to demonstrating respect, inclusion and transparency in all our activities. The perspectives of older people, their best interests and ethical behaviour are at the heart of all our activity.

We never underestimate what older people can achieve and we aim to work with others that share these principles.

### 2. POLICY

- i. This policy is aimed at people and organisations who come into contact with Age UK Bexley. We recognise that there may be occasions when people are disappointed by how we have performed and, therefore, want to make a complaint. This policy explains how we will deal with this.
- ii. This policy is not aimed at members of staff or volunteers; they should refer to our grievance policy for details of how to make raise a concern about their working or volunteering.
- iii. The following procedure is for people who have received a service from Age UK Bexley to follow if they wish to raise a concern or complaint about the service.

### 3. Identifying Complaints

It is for complainants to determine the nature and seriousness of their complaint. The following list illustrates the range of issues to which complaints may relate, but it is not meant to be prescriptive or exclusive.

- The quality or nature of a service.
- Refusal or withdrawal of a service.
- Conduct of staff or volunteers.
- Poor administration.
- Unfair discrimination.
- Provision of services which are inappropriate or unresponsive to the needs of specific groups.
- Provision of inaccurate information or failure to provide information.
- Failure to follow agreed policies or procedures.
- Unreasonable delays in responding to enquiries or providing services.
- Unacceptable or inappropriate policies of the organisation.

#### 4. PROCEDURE

Should you wish to make a complaint you should do so by sending an email to the Chief Executive Officer at the following e-mail address:

[alison.baker@ageukbexley.org.uk](mailto:alison.baker@ageukbexley.org.uk)

If it is difficult for you to send an email, complaints can be made in writing to our address as follows: Age UK Bexley, Belvedere Community Centre, Mitchell Close, Belvedere, DA17 6AA, marked for the attention of the Chief Executive.

The email or letter should set out the following:

- Your name, if the complaint is personal; or the name of your organisation if the complaint is by an organisation;
- Brief details about the circumstances giving rise to your complaint (the subject matter, the dates of relevant events, who was involved);
- Brief details of the outcome that you would like to see to resolve your complaint.
- Your contact details.

If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, please make your complaint by letter marked for the attention of the Chair of the Trustees of Age UK Bexley at the above address.

The Chief Executive (or Chair as appropriate) will ensure every effort is made to resolve matters informally through dialogue.

If matters cannot be resolved through dialogue, the Chief Executive (or Chair as appropriate) will write to you to confirm that they will undertake a formal investigation and will respond to you following that investigation as soon as possible. We will aim to acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 10 working days. In most cases we would not expect any investigation and response to take longer than a further 15 working days, but if there are reasons why we cannot complete this part of the process in 15 working days, we will let you know

If you are dissatisfied by the written response you receive, you should write to the Chief Executive (or Chair, as appropriate) within 15 working days of getting the response. You should explain why you are dissatisfied by the response and ask for it to be referred to the Board of Trustees who have not previously been involved in the complaint.

The Board of Trustees will meet as soon as is practical to review the paperwork and give you the opportunity to present your case in person. The decision of the Board of Trustees will be given in writing within 10 working days. Their decision is final.

In dealing with complaints, the following principles will apply:

If you need assistance to bring your complaint, for example signing, Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) or interpreter, the Board of Trustees will take reasonable steps to provide this assistance or to adjust the process to accommodate your needs.

Complaints will be handled with sensitivity and due regard to confidentiality; but we may need to disclose details of your complaint either to members of staff or to our funders in order to investigate and respond appropriately.

If there is a delay in the process, we will keep you informed

## **5. Involvement of Other Agencies**

Sometimes a complaint will involve services provided by, or staff employed by, an organisation other than Age UK Bexley. For Example:

- a person may be refused a place in an Age UK Bexley Day Centre on the basis of a Social Services needs assessment
- a day centre user may be unhappy about Social Services charges for Age UK Bexley day centre attendance
- a service user may wish to make a complaint relating to an employee of another organisation who is providing a service on Age UK Bexley premises (e.g. a practitioner employed by the Community Health Services Trust and operating a clinic at an Age UK Bexley day centre).

In these instances, potential complainants should be advised that they should complain to whichever organisation has direct responsibility for the person or matter they are complaining about. Age UK Bexley staff should offer to assist the person in identifying the most appropriate course of action. This may include helping them to obtain the support of an independent advocate, interpreter or signer.

## **6. FOLLOW UP**

The following action will be completed once a complaint process has been exhausted

- i. If an external complaint is upheld, Age UK Bexley will take the appropriate corrective action to ensure higher standards in future.
- ii. All complaints will be recorded and reviewed periodically by the Board of Trustees.
- iii. Promotion of the Policy and Procedure
- iv. A copy of this policy and procedure will be made available on our website.
- v. A copy of this policy will be included in information packs left with our clients and in our external venues.

*Confidential*

### Record of Complaint

Name and Address of Complainant:

Complaint No: .....

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.....  
.....

**Content of Complaint**

(Tick)

- Unhappy about staff or volunteer's attitude
- Lack of care or attention by staff or volunteers
- Racial discrimination
- Lack of response to requests or messages
- Believes should not be refused service

Other (please specify) .....

.....  
.....

**Scheme involved:**

(Tick)

- Information Helpline
- Footcare
- Day Centre
- Benefit advice Service
- Fitness

Befriending Cafes

Other (please specify) .....

**Stage One**

**Dates**

**By Whom**

Complaint received	.....	.....
Complaint acknowledged	.....	.....
Complaint recorded	.....	.....
Copy to Chairperson	.....	.....
Written response sent to complaint	.....	.....
Notify Contract Officer	.....	.....

**Stage Two**

Reply to response received	.....	.....
Reply acknowledged	.....	.....
Reply recorded	.....	.....
Copy to Chairperson	.....	.....
Investigation commenced *	.....	.....
Investigation completed *	.....	.....
Notify Contact Officer	.....	.....

(\* Record the names of persons investigating complaint)

**Stage Three**

Written dissatisfaction received	.....	.....
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Written dissatisfaction acknowledged .....  
Written dissatisfaction recorded .....  
Copy to Chairperson .....  
Board of Trustees meeting - date held .....  
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Stage 3 written response sent to Complainant .....  
Notify Contract Officer .....

Policy reviewed by : Alison Baker

Date: 1 June 2022

Ratified:

Review Date: June 2024