



# COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**Last Review Date: February 2023**

**Adopted by Board: December 2010**

**Next Review Date: February 2024**

**Minor changes Date: July 2021**

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## Section 1 Statement of Policy

Age UK Birmingham and Sandwell welcomes feedback on all our programmes, services and products. Feedback received will be considered within our business planning process, helping us ensure that our services are timely, appropriate and of the highest quality within the resources available.

Expressions of concern or dissatisfaction with our services are important part as valuable feedback. The Complaints Procedure is in place to ensure expressions of concern or dissatisfaction are received by the organisation and are handled efficiently and fairly.

We aim for our service users to have confidence that they can raise any concerns and to trust that we will address their concerns in a timely and appropriate way.

Any complaint must be raised by the individual, their family or carer, or by a person who has a current Power of Attorney. If a client or service user wishes to raise a complaint through a third party the organisation will require a signed written statement to that effect from the complainant.

The organisation will not accept anonymous complaints.

The complainant will be protected by the organisation from any recrimination or victimisation.

In a wider context, the organisation welcomes comments and views on its work and priorities from all interested parties.

### 1.2 SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This Complaints Policy applies to all Trustees, staff and volunteers, and the Procedure is available for use by all service users.

### 1.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board will monitor implementation of this Policy and will review annually all complaints received. As part of the Business Planning process the Board will consider complaints received that may influence the shape or range of services provided.

The Chief Executive will ensure all complaints received are recorded and tracked to monitor the outcome of each complaint and to highlight any patterns or trends across the organisation.

The Chief Executive will alert the Board of Trustees immediately to any serious complaints that raise concerns about the delivery of services, or that could lead to reputational risk.

The Chief Executive and Senior Management Team will monitor complaints that are upheld to identify areas where operational practice could be improved.

### 1.4 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This Complaints Policy will be reviewed annually by the Board.

The Complaints Procedure may be updated by the CEO at any time as required.

## Section 2

### PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

Any individual expressing concern or dissatisfaction with Age UK Birmingham and Sandwell (the organisation) or its services will be invited to submit a formal or informal complaint.

This procedure is in place to ensure that complaints are received by the organisation and are handled efficiently and fairly.

#### Informal Complaint resolution

Anyone raising concern or dissatisfaction with the organisation's services will be asked if they wish to register their comments as a complaint.

Our aim is to resolve most complaints informally, and as close to the origin of the complaint as possible. Where the complaint is particularly serious or confidential then the formal procedure set out below should be followed.

- Step 1 Complaint to be raised with the most appropriate person, usually the manager responsible for that area of work.
- Step 2 Management discussion with the individual raising the complaint and, if appropriate, with any member of staff or volunteer involved or named in the complaint.
- Step 3 Management response within 3 working days of receipt of the complaint. In most cases a personal response by staff to the informal complaint, may be sufficient, but if appropriate, or where requested, a written response (by email or letter) may be provided.

The organisation takes a constructive approach to complaints and the response will most often provide a corrective/preventative solution or an explanation of what has happened and why any further action is not appropriate.

Having followed the informal route if the complainant believes that their concerns have not been properly addressed, or where the complaint is particularly serious or confidential, then the formal procedure set out below should be followed.

#### Formal Complaints Procedure

All formal complaints should be addressed only to the Chief Executive and raised by the following means:

- by post: Age UK Birmingham and Age UK Sandwell, Stratford House,  
Stratford Place, Birmingham, B12 0HT
- by email: [info@ageukbirmingham.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukbirmingham.org.uk)
- by phone: 0121 437 0033

If the complaint relates to the Chief Executive, then it should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

- Step 1 The complaint should normally be set down in writing by letter, email or on the formal complaints form (letter or e mail). If raised verbally in person or by phone the complainant may be asked to complete a written complaints form.
- Step 2 The complaint will be registered and acknowledged in writing within 3 working days.
- Step 3 The Chief Executive will appoint a Manager as the Investigating Officer to gather evidence, to interview all parties concerned and to report in writing on their conclusions.
- If required the Chief Executive may provide for an independent investigation into the substance of any formal complaint.
- Step 4 A full written response from the Chief Executive will be provided to the complainant within a maximum of 20 working days. This length of time may be necessary to enable us to investigate the matter with all appropriate individuals.
- If the Chief Executive is unable to fully conclude the matter under investigation they will inform the complainant of the reason for the delay and give an anticipated response date.

If after Stage 4 the complaint still remains unresolved to the satisfaction of the complainant they should send a written notice of appeal to the Chief Executive giving the reasons why the response is not satisfactory. This must be received by the Chief Executive within 3 weeks of the date of the response,

### **Complaints Appeal Procedure**

Having received a written notice of appeal the Chief Executive will notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

- Step 1 The Board of Trustees will nominate an appeal panel of 3 Trustees or of 2 Trustees and the Chief Executive. The panel will nominate a Chair.
- Step 2 The panel will review all written material relating to the complaint including the original complaint; the report of the Investigating Officer; the response given to the complainant and the notice of appeal.
- The panel will arrange an Appeal Hearing within 15 working days of the date the notice of appeal was received.
- Step 3 **Appeal Hearing**
- At the Hearing the panel will interview the complainant inviting them to state the reasons for their complaint and their lack of satisfaction with the response.
- The panel may choose to interview other individuals involved in the matter.
- The panel may, or may not, choose to bring together at the Hearing the complainant and other individuals involved. If interviewed jointly, questions from all parties will be put through the Chair of the panel.
- The complainant may be accompanied at the Hearing by a friend or family member. Any member of staff or volunteer attending the Hearing may be accompanied by a colleague.

An independent note taker will be in attendance at the Appeal Hearing and the complainant will receive a copy of the notes of the Hearing.

The Chair of the panel will respond in writing to the complainant within 5 working days of the date of the Hearing.

The decision of the Appeal panel will be final.