



Complaints Policy & Procedure

Age UK Camden

Policy Statement

Age UK Camden Group (hereafter referred to as AUC Group) aims to deliver high-quality services to all clients and stakeholders. We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when our services fall short of expected standards.

We welcome complaints, compliments, comments, and feedback as opportunities to learn, improve, and strengthen our services. We are committed to ensuring that complaints are handled fairly, promptly, respectfully, and without discrimination.

Making a complaint will not result in disadvantage or poorer treatment.

- A verbal complaint will be considered to ascertain whether full investigation is necessary. At the very least, an opportunity to discuss concerns may lead to resolution.
- A written complaint will be treated as formal and be investigated through the procedure that accompanies this policy.

We will seek to resolve complaints, disputes or conflicts at the earliest stage, and as close to their point of origin, as possible.

Accessibility and Equality

We aim to ensure there are no barriers to making a complaint, suggestion, or compliment.

All complainants will be treated with respect and courtesy regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, faith, disability (physical, sensory, mental, or linguistic), or relationship with the organisation.

We will:

- Provide information in accessible formats where required
- Arrange interpreting services where necessary

- Offer additional support or independent advocacy where appropriate.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled confidentially and in line with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act

Information will only be shared with those who need to know to investigate and resolve the complaint.

General Principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

- Complaints should be easy to make
- Most complaints can be resolved early
- Complaints will be handled openly, honestly, and without bias
- There will be no victimisation of anyone raising a concern
- Complaints made by advocates will be verified to ensure consent
- The complaints process is not intended to apportion blame, though disciplinary action may follow where appropriate
- The organisation reserves the right to refuse complaints that are vexatious, discriminatory, or malicious.

Scope

This policy applies to all Age UK Camden group clients and their advocates.

If the complaint is regarding the Chief Executive Officer, then it will be investigated by the Chair of the Board.

Legislation and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by and aligns with: UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, the Equality Act 2010, and the Care Act 2014, as well as relevant regulations such as Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 (PECR) and guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office.

Safeguarding

If a complaint raises any safeguarding concerns of either of the party, then it will be dealt under the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and referred immediately to the appropriate Safeguarding authority.

Involvement of Other Agencies

Sometimes a complaint will involve services provided by, or staff employed by, an organisation other than Age UK Camden Group.

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 Camden Group 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.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints may be submitted by contacting the relevant Service Manager by telephone or email, or by writing to Age UK Camden, 102 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London, NW3 6NS.

Where a complaint is submitted in writing, the complainant must ensure that the name of the relevant Service Manager is clearly stated on the correspondence and that the envelope or email is marked "Private and Confidential."

Should a complainant wish to raise their complaint with a Senior Manager, the relevant contact details are set out in Appendix 1 of this policy.

Complaints may be addressed to a Senior Manager, the Chief Executive Officer, or the Chair of the Board of Trustees and submitted to the postal address above or the relevant email address (see Appendix 1). In such cases, the complainant must clearly identify the intended recipient and ensure that the envelope or email is marked "Private and Confidential."

The Complaints Process Flowchart is set out in Appendix 2.

- Informal Resolution

Verbal or informal complaints received by a staff member will be redirected to the Head of Operations.

The Head of Operations will discuss the concerns raised with the complainant. This can be done through face to face discussion, by telephone, or by email.

Where resolved informally, the outcome should be recorded, and a letter will be sent which will be then saved in the client database system (Charitylog).

If the complaint is regarding the Head of operations, then it will be dealt by another member of the Senior Management Team.

Complainants may bypass this stage and proceed directly to Stage 1.

- Stage 1 - Formal Stage

- The Senior Manager will undertake investigation of the complaint.
- The Senior Manager will write to the complainant with their response to the complaint. This may include a recommendation that an independent person should be sought to conciliate on the matter. If the complainant wishes to take up the option of conciliation, the Senior Manager should seek a suitable independent conciliator.
- The response to the complaint should be completed within 28 working days of receipt of the complaint. This may be extended to up to 3 months where there is good reason to do so.
- If the complainant is still dissatisfied, they should write to the CEO within 28 working days to ask for a Review Panel to be set up. This needs to be detailed in any response letter. (Please refer to Appendix 1 for contact details)
- Records of the complaint and its management should be sent to and filed by the Governance and Quality Manager on the Complaints Log.
- Stage 2 - Review Panel
 - If a Review Panel is required, it will consist of two or three people, including one Trustee (or the Chair, who will chair the Panel) and a member of the Age UK Camden Group's Senior Management Team, or another Senior Manager who has not been involved at any previous stage of the complaint.
 - The complainant and their advocate, friend or supporter (if any) have the right to attend the Panel meeting to present the complaint and answer any questions the Panel may wish to ask.
 - The Complaints Procedure is not a legal process. Age UK Camden Group regards it as inappropriate for the complainant to be accompanied by a legal representative and will not agree to any such participation.
 - The Chair of the Review Panel will notify the complainant in writing of the Panel's decision within 14 working days of the Panel meeting. The letter will also advise the complainant that the Panel's decision is the final stage of Age UK Camden's Group Complaints Procedure, but that if they are still dissatisfied they may refer the matter to Camden Adult Social Care, in the case of Council-funded services, or to the relevant NHS commissioner in the case of NHS funded services. The organisation will share these details on request.

- Where members of staff are asked to attend a Complaint Review Panel, they should be advised that they may be accompanied by a friend, colleague or trade union representative if they wish.
- If the Review Panel is unable to agree on a particular matter, the issue shall be decided by the Chair of the Panel.
- Records of the complaint and its management should be sent to and filed by the Governance and Quality Manager on the Complaints Log.

Complaints about our Debt Advice Service

Please note: If your complaint is about the Debt advice service and we take more than a maximum of eight weeks to resolve your complaint, or you don't think we have resolved your complaint after exhausting our complaints mechanism, you can contact the Financial Ombudsman Service online or by phone.

- Phone: **0800 023 4567**
- Online: <https://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us/complain-online>

Recording and Monitoring

All complaints will be formally logged in the Complaints Log.

The Complaints Log will include:

- Complaint reference number
- Date received
- Service area
- Summary of complaint
- Actions taken
- Outcome
- Date closed

The Governance and Quality Manager is responsible for maintaining the log and reporting trends.

An annual summary of complaints and outcomes will be presented to the Board.

Responsibilities

- Board of Trustees: Receives assurance and summary reports
- Chief Executive Officer: Overall responsibility for complaints management
- Senior Management Team: Investigation and resolution of complaints
- Governance and Quality Manager: Logging, monitoring, and reporting
- All staff and volunteers: Courteous handling and escalation of complaints

Review of Policy

This policy and procedures will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation or organisational practice.

Appendix 1:

Head of Operations- Monica Riveros

Contact email address: monica.riveros@ageukcamden.org.uk

Contact number: 0207 2390 407

Head of HR & Central Services- Angela Ward

Contact email address: angela.ward@ageukcamden.org.uk

Contact number: 0207 2390 415

Chief Executive Officer- Ross Diamond

Contact email address: ross.diamond@ageukcamden.org.uk

Contact number: 0207 2390 466

Chair of the Board- Mary Burd

Contact email address: chair@ageukcamden.org.uk

Appendix 2:

Complaints Process Flowchart

