

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

Age UK Cheshire East strongly supports the view that clients and others coming into contact with the services run by the organisation should be encouraged to provide feedback about what they have experienced. This may be in the form of a complaint, compliment, suggestion or constructive criticism. The organisation views this feedback as invaluable and is committed to using it to appraise the services it provides and continually strive to improve them.

Age UK Cheshire East:

- recognises a job well done and to this end welcomes praise and compliments from satisfied people who use or come into contact with our services.
- recognises the importance of customer feedback, which is always read by the Chief Executive.
- is committed to the fair and effective application of this procedure. Therefore the Board of Trustees will monitor the organisation's performance on a quarterly basis.

Each service distributes customer satisfaction questionnaires, the outcomes of which are recorded and reported to Trustees on a regular basis to demonstrate public benefit. Complaints are recorded on a Comments/Complaints and Feedback log. All feedback is regularly evaluated by senior managers.

2. TYPES OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

- 2.1 Service Managers should log constructive suggestions, criticisms and compliments on their service's feedback log. An extract of this information is compiled and presented to the Board on a quarterly basis.

Service Managers should respond to written comments and suggestions **within 10 working days** of receipt.

A supply of Customer Feedback Forms are available from Age UK Cheshire East's offices.

See "Customer Feedback Forms" – Appendix 1

2.1.2 Complaints

A supply of “How to Complain” leaflets are available from Age UK Cheshire East’s offices.

Complaints are divided into 3 levels: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3.

All complaints are important. The reason for assigning levels to the complaints received is to ensure we give the correct response for each complaint.

The following definitions have been designed to offer guidance. Ultimately, the Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that all complaints are dealt with in the appropriate manner.

3. DEFINITION OF COMPLAINTS

3.1 Level 1

Some requests made by clients concerning day-to-day situations which can be dealt with immediately could be construed as complaints. To ensure the contentment of our clients, staff should respond to their requests and rectify their concerns immediately wherever possible.

“My home help arrived late.”

“I’ve been trying to ring all morning, but the phone was engaged.”

Comments like the ones above can be dealt with on a day to day basis. Should the same complaint be received more than once, however, the complaints should then be treated as a Level 2 complaint and reported to the Chief Executive.

3.2 Level 2

Some matters of concern can often be dealt with as they arise. Good communications, both internal and external are very important to our ability to prevent misunderstandings. If they cannot be resolved immediately but certainly within **2 working days** they should be treated as a Level 3 complaint.

“I came into the office to speak to someone about insurance and they were very offhand with me and kept me waiting for ages.”

“I took a dress back to the charity shop and they refused to give me an exchange.”

See “Customer Complaint Form” – Appendix 5

3.3 Level 3

All Level 3 complaints made by, or on behalf of, our clients are to be referred to the Chief Executive, who is responsible for ensuring that a thorough investigation is carried out.

The following are examples of complaints that would be treated as Level 3:

- A complaint where the complainant is not satisfied with the local response;
- A complaint that has been made before;
- The complaint is about an issue that has jeopardised the safety of a client or the good name of Age UK Cheshire East.

“I had a £10 note in my handbag when I went to the day centre and now it has disappeared”.

“This is the third time I have complained about my home help’s attitude”.

Issues which will require additional input are:

- a) Where it appears that the well-being of a client has been compromised, the Chief Executive must be informed immediately and will instigate an investigation into the complaint.
- b) Where the complaint involved an allegation of abuse, the Chief Executive will instigate an investigation and, where necessary, contact with the police.
- c) Where it appears that a criminal offence has been committed, and the allegation is serious and substantial, the Chief Executive will instigate the investigation and notify the police.

See “Customer Complaint Form” – Appendix 5

4. **RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

See “Customer Feedback Flow Chart” – Appendix 2

4.1 **Resolving a Level 1 Complaint**

Level 1 complaints should be dealt with immediately and reported to the service manager who will then decide whether it should be treated as a Level 1 or 2 complaint. **If the same complaint is received more than once immediately treat as a Level 2 complaint.**

4.2 **Resolving a Level 2 Complaint**

4.2.1 **Respond to the Complaint**

On receipt of a complaint staff must take immediate action. If they are able to resolve the cause of the complaint then they should do so and report the complaint and the action taken to the service manager. If they are unable to resolve the cause of the complaint they must immediately notify the service manager or her/his deputy.

4.2.2 **Record the Complaint**

On receipt of the complaint, the service manager must complete a Complaint Form. Once the complaint is resolved the form is sent to the Chief Executive and a copy kept on file.

4.2.3 **The Complainant is not satisfied with the local response to their complaint or the complaint is received more than once.**

It is important that the service manager or the Chief Executive checks with the complainant that he/she is satisfied with the local response to their complaint immediately.

If the same complaint is made from more than one person or by the same person more than once, it should be treated as a Level 3 complaint and referred to the Chief Executive.

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response at local level the service manager should treat the complaint as Level 3 and refer it to the Chief Executive.

4.3 **Resolving a Level 3 Complaint**

4.3.1 **Record the Complaint**

On receipt of a Level 3 complaint the service manager or her/his deputy must complete a Complaint Form.

Level 3 complaints should be put in writing before an investigation can take place. If the complainant is unable to do this they may sign the Complaint Form once the details have been recorded.

The Complaint Form and letter of complaint (if any) should be marked URGENT and must be passed to the Chief Executive within 24 hours of the complaint being made.

NB: Should a person wish to complain to the Chief Executive without going to the service manager, a feedback form can be used and sent directly to the Chief Executive.

4.3.2 **Acknowledging the Complaint**

A letter of acknowledgement will be initiated by the Chief Executive **within 2 working days** of receipt of the complaint form.

4.3.3 **Investigate the Complaint**

The Chief Executive is responsible for co-ordinating a full investigation of each Level 3 complaint in liaison with the relevant staff and a suitable response agreed. The resolution should be achieved **within 28 days of receipt of the complaint**.

Where the Chief Executive considers that a complaint may carry a threat of litigation, she/he will seek legal advice prior to proceeding with an investigation in order to minimise the risk of any civil proceedings.

Where appropriate, a preliminary interview may be arranged to clarify the nature of the Level 3 complaint or to obtain further information. It may be possible at this stage to resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction without taking the matter further.

4.3.4 **Communicate the result of an investigation**

On completion of an investigation, the Chief Executive will respond formally in writing to the complainant detailing the results. All communications should be marked "Private and Confidential".

The letter should be informative both with regard to the reasons for any failure in service and also the steps taken to prevent a reoccurrence and should contain an apology where appropriate.

The letter must also contain information about the steps the complainant should take if he/she is not happy with the response.

4.3.5 The Complainant is not satisfied with the response to their complaint

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to their complaint they may write to the Chairman of Age UK Cheshire East who may invite an independent person to look into the matter and make recommendations or he/she may deal with it him/herself. This should be completed within **28 days**.

5. MONITORING PROCEDURE

The Chief Executive is responsible, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, for monitoring the type and number of complaints received and the organisation's response to them.

The Board of Trustees will receive a quarterly report outlining the number of complaints received and a summary of customer feedback.

6. PUBLICITY

Age UK Cheshire East's Customer Feedback Leaflets encourage people who come into contact with our services to make suggestions and comments. The leaflets can either be passed to a member of staff or sent directly to the Chief Executive.

Service managers must ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of this procedure and are able to respond and give appropriate guidance to clients.

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