

COMPLAINTS POLICY / PROCEDURE

POLICY STATEMENT

Age UK Faversham & Sittingbourne's aims to provide a high-quality, responsive, client service. In order to ensure we do so we need to take account of the views and wishes of those we are here to support. We welcome every opportunity to monitor and improve our service and having a complaints policy and a clear procedure for resolving complaints is one way of doing this.

RAISING A CONCERN

Age UK Faversham & Sittingbourne recognises that issues with our services may arise from time to time. We're always very keen to listen to any concerns and, if we haven't met your expectations for whatever reason, we'll aim to put that right in accordance with this policy. The key to this is effective and meaningful communication.

PROCEDURE FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

WHO CAN USE THIS PROCEDURE?

This procedure is for anyone who comes into contact with trustees, staff and volunteers from Age UK Faversham & Sittingbourne. By anyone we mean clients - the families and friends of clients, other voluntary groups, statutory agencies and any other member of the public.

THE PROCEDURE

STAGE 1

- 1.1** We hope that the majority of complaints can be resolved informally by speaking directly to the person or persons involved. We encourage you to be open and frank about any concerns you may have and to give us the opportunity to put it right if we can.

If it has not been possible to resolve your complaint at Stage 1, or you feel uncomfortable about talking directly to the person or persons involved, you should use Stage 2.

STAGE 2

- 2.1** If you can't resolve your concern by talking directly to the person or person involved, please put your complaint in writing using this procedure. You should give as much detail as possible to enable us to:

- Understand the nature of your complaint
- Know which of our staff or volunteers are involved (if any)
- Understand what it is you would like us to do to put things right (this is particularly important)

- 2.2** Please address your complaint to the Chief Executive Officer or if for any reason your complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer, then please address it to the Chairman of Trustees and send it either by post to the following address:

Age UK Faversham & Sittingbourne
The Old Fire Station
Crescent Road
Faversham
ME13 7GU

Or email: complaints@ageukfs.org.uk

Or fill in our online form.

- 2.3** We will formally acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receiving it. At this stage, we will usually inform you of the name of the person in the organisation who has been asked to deal with your complaint. This may be:

- In a case where your complaint involves a particular member of staff, their line manager;

- In a case where your complaint relates to a particular service, the head of that service;
 - In a case where your complaint relates to an organisational failing, an issue of governance or is otherwise particularly serious, a member of the senior executive team
- 2.4** The person appointed by us to deal with your complaint ('the Complaint Officer') will, in the first instance, carry out an investigation. This may involve inviting you to a meeting to discuss your complaint in more detail or asking you to provide more information in writing.
- 2.5** The Complaint Officer will try and conclude the investigation within 20 working days of the date of acknowledgment of the complaint. Where the Complaint Officer thinks that more time may be required, they will write to you and explain how much more time will be required and the reasons for this.
- 2.6** Once the investigation has been completed, the Complaint Officer will write to you and let you know the outcome.
- 2.7** If you are not satisfied by the response at Stage 2 you should move to Stage 3.

STAGE 3

- 3.1** If you are not satisfied with the outcome to your complaint in accordance with Step 2 above, you may write to the Chairman of Trustees of Age UK Faversham & Sittingbourne. You must do so within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of Step 2 above.
- 3.2** When you write to the Chairman of Trustees under Step 3, you should:
- Use the same contact details as above, but mark the letter private and confidential
 - Give us much detail as possible explaining why you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Step 2 response
 - Explain what you would like the Chairman of Trustees to do to put things right
- 3.3** Your complaint under Step 3 will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receiving it.
- 3.4** The Chairman of Trustees will decide who is best to deal with your complaint. Depending on the circumstances, this may be:
- A member of staff more senior to the Complaint Officer
 - A member of the executive team
 - The Chairman of Trustees themselves, or another trustee or panel of trustees

- 3.5** Whomever is appointed to deal with your complaint under Step 3 will carry out a review of the way that the complaint was handled in Step 2 and write to you within 20 working days of the date of acknowledgment of the complaint. Where that person thinks that more time may be required, they will write to you and explain how much more time will be required and the reasons for this.
- 3.6** This will be our final response to your complaint.

Time Limits for dealing with complaints

Please note that we reserve the right not to deal with complaints that are raised after a period of 6 months has expired from the date of the last incident complained about unless there are good and substantial reasons for doing so.

Individual members of Staff

Please note that you do not have the right to know what steps we take internally as a consequence of a complaint, including any steps we take regarding an individual member of staff.

Making a complaint on behalf of someone else

Where you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, such as a family member, you may only do so if you have either presented us with evidence of a valid power of attorney or provided us with the individual's written consent.

Data Protection

We keep and store records of complaints, our investigations and the outcome, ordinarily for 6 years from the point of our final response to the complaint. For more information about how we keep your data safe, and for information on your statutory rights, see our Privacy Policy.

Complaints Policy / Procedure

Published: 14/10/2021

Reviewed: annually

Approved by the Trustees:

Signed: clare burgess - CEO

DATE: 14/10/2021

Copies of this document can be made available in different formats. Call 01795 532 766 for more information.

Age UK Faversham & Sittingbourne's Chief Executive Officer is currently: Clare Burgess

Age UK Faversham & Sittingbourne's Chairman of Trustees is currently: Donna Reed