

Complaints Procedure

Overview

Age UK Kensington and Chelsea (AUKC) aims to provide high quality of services to all clients. However, we are aware that there may be times when the service falls short of the standards we set ourselves and it is important that we receive, handle and respond appropriately to complaints and comments to address concerns. We look upon complaints as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve, and provide better services.

Our aim is to deal promptly and effectively with any complaints so that individuals feel confident that their complaint and worries are listened to and acted upon. All written complaints will be acknowledged, investigated and action taken as necessary using the procedure set out below. If a complaint is made verbally, it will be examined to determine whether it should be investigated.

We follow national guidance on complaints handling which uses a three-stage model - *local resolution, complaint review and appeal*.

In the event of a complaint involving alleged or suspected abuse, the matter will be immediately referred to the local Safeguarding Adults authority in line with our Safeguarding policy.

We will facilitate access to an independent advocacy service for those who lack the capacity or means to make a complaint without such assistance.

Verbal Complaints (also known as Informal Complaints)

We will aim to listen to, and resolve any verbal complaints at the time of making. All verbal complaints will be recorded and reviewed to determine whether an investigation is required. If so, it will be dealt with according to the Written Complaints Procedure below. Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of any local resolution attempt, they have the right to request a formal complaints approach.

Written Complaints (also known as Formal Complaints)

Written complaints will be acknowledged normally within five working days. The complaint will be investigated and a full response given within 28 days. If we are not able to meet this timescale, we will contact you to explain this and let you know when we will respond in full by.

Complaints Procedure

How to Make a Formal Complaint

Complaints Procedure - Stage 1

You should contact the **Service Manager**, either by telephone or by writing to **Age UK Kensington and Chelsea, 1 Thorpe Close, London W10 5XL**. Please include details of your complaint and the best way for us to contact you. Your letter will be acknowledged normally within five working days, and your complaint investigated by the manager who will send you a full response within 28 days. If we are unable to meet these timescales, we will let you know.

Complaints Procedure - Stage 2 Appeal

Should the matter still not have been settled to your satisfaction, or if you are unhappy with the response of the Service Manager, you have the right to appeal. You should write to the Chief Executive Officer at: **Age UK Kensington and Chelsea, 1 Thorpe Close, London W10 5XL**, marking your envelope "Private and Confidential".

The Chief Executive Officer may review your appeal directly, or may delegate this responsibility to a Senior member of staff or a Trustee as appropriate. They will review all the circumstances of your complaint and will invite you to a meeting to outline your concerns. You may bring a friend or advocate with you to support you at this meeting. You will be sent the outcome of the appeal in writing within 28 days of receiving your appeal. Please note that the outcome of the appeal is final and there is no further appeal mechanism within Age UK Kensington and Chelsea.

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>

You must refer your complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service within **six months** of the date of our final response.

