

# Complaints Policy

## Context and overview

### Key details

Policy reviewed by:	Alexandra Norman
Approved by the board on:	March 2026
Next review date:	March 2027

Age UK Lambeth is an independent local charity that has worked in the community to help older people, their families and carers for over 70 years. We have dedicated staff and amazing volunteers helping us to deliver services and activities for older people in Lambeth. Our mission is to support older people in Lambeth to live enriched, productive and purposeful lives by supporting individuals to remain independent, reducing social isolation and ensuring they get the right support at the right time.

We are committed to providing high quality, inclusive and accessible services to our beneficiaries, supporters and stakeholders. We value your feedback and take complaints seriously as an opportunity to learn and improve. This policy outlines our commitment to handling complaints efficiently, fairly, and transparently.

### 1. Scope

This policy applies to all complaints and compliments received by Age UK Lambeth regarding our operations, programs, services or interactions with individuals and organisations. This includes complaints and compliments received through all channels, such as in person, by phone, via email or through our website.

### 2. Principles

Our complaints handling process adheres to the following principles:

- A. **Accessibility:** We ensure that our complaints procedure is easily accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities or language barriers.
- a. Individuals can request a printed copy of this policy, that can be enlarged or translated to make it more accessible,
  - b. Ensure meetings are held in accessible locations,
  - c. Identify any access needs that the complainant has to support them in attending any meetings, accessing information and correspondence.
- B. **Fairness:** We treat all complaints impartially, without favouritism or discrimination.
- C. **Confidentiality:** We respect the privacy of complainants and aim to keep your identity confidential. If you request that the person you are complaining about (e.g., a specific staff member) is not informed of your identity, we will honor this wherever possible. It may be impossible to fully investigate a specific incident without revealing the source of the complaint. If this is the case, we will discuss the implications with you before proceeding. There are safeguarding exceptions to this (please refer to the safeguarding section 4.1).
- D. **Timeliness:** We aim to acknowledge complaints promptly and respond within reasonable timeframes that are set out within this policy.

**Accountability:** We take full responsibility for resolving complaints and providing appropriate redress where necessary. While our primary goal is to reach a resolution that is mutually acceptable to all parties, we recognise that this is not always possible.

In cases where a consensus cannot be reached, we commit to:

- **Impartiality:** Ensuring the final decision is based on a fair and objective review of the evidence.
- **Transparency:** Providing a clear explanation of the reasoning behind our final decision.
- **Escalation:** Informing all parties of their right to appeal if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome (refer to 3.3).

- E. **Continuous Improvement:** We use complaints as an opportunity for learning and improving our operations, policies and practices.

### 3. Complaints Procedure

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about Age UK Lambeth's actions, or lack of actions, the standard of our service or an interaction with individual/s within our organisation.

We will deal with complaints in a fair and transparent way, treating those who make them with courtesy and respect. All complaints will be listened to and their concern acted upon. Actions taken will be shared with the complainant and this information

will be shared with staff (where appropriate), stakeholders and regulators for openness and transparency. Responses will be clear with solutions offered and learnings identified.

### **3.1 Receiving an initial complaint - Stage 1**

Any member of staff receiving a complaint is authorised, in the first instance, to seek to resolve it as quickly as possible and is expected to handle it in a polite, respectful and understanding manner. This is considered informally managing a complaint. However, If it can not be resolved informally and the complainant wishes to raise the matter further, it will be recorded on our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, Podio, using the complaints form and raised with an appropriate member of staff to investigate further. These are considered formal complaints and whether raised verbally or written, will be recorded on Podio.

Complainants are encouraged to raise their concerns as soon as possible, preferably within 30 days of the incident or issue taking place.

Complaints can be raised via phone, email or on the Age UK Lambeth website.

Age UK Lambeth,  
10 Acre Lane,  
Brixton,  
SW2 5SG

**Tel:** 0207 346 6800

**Email:** [info@ageuklambeth.org](mailto:info@ageuklambeth.org)

**Website:** <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/lambeth/about-us/feedback-and-complaints/>

All complaints submitted via our website will receive an automatic response confirming the complaint has been submitted, including a reference number. You also have the option to request a copy of the submitted complaint.

We will address all complaints within 5 working days of receiving them (Age UK Lambeth classifies working days as Monday to Friday and excludes Bank Holidays). The complainant will be contacted and informed who is looking into the complaint, what action is being taken and when further response can be expected.

### **3.2 Receiving a further complaint - Stage 2**

If a complainant is not satisfied by the handling of the complaint and/or the staff member investigating feels the complaint is sufficiently serious they feel unable to complete the investigation, the matter will be passed onto an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team and the above procedure followed.

### **3.3 Appeal Process**

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, an appeal can be lodged with the Chief Executive of Age UK Lambeth who will review the investigation of the complaint and will endeavour to resolve any outstanding issues.

To lodge an appeal the complainant can do so via phone, email or on the Age UK Lambeth website.

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The complainant must address the appeal “to the Chief Executive of Age UK Lambeth”, stating the reasons they are not satisfied with the outcome/s.

All appeals will be recorded on Podio alongside the original complaint.

If the complaint is regarding the Chief Executive, this will be referred to the Chair of Trustees.

The Chief Executive is obliged to put a decision, in writing, to the complainant within 28 days.

## **4 Records**

Age UK Lambeth will keep a record of both verbal and written complaints in our CRM system, Podio. This will include all evidence, actions and any investigations carried out. Complainants have the right to access any information recorded about them, as required under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, and to be assured that any information kept by Age UK Lambeth is only seen by those with a legitimate need to know. This could refer to, but not limited to, the Police for a criminal investigation, the NHS for medical negligence, Age UK Lambeth’s Board of Trustees to investigate the CEO.

### **4.1 Safeguarding & Law**

If a complaint involves direct allegations of abuse or criminal activity, or if there is an overriding public interest or vital interest (life or death) we have a legal and

professional duty to report this to the relevant authorities. This may trigger a formal safeguarding process or criminal investigation.

## **5. Right to Refuse Complaints**

Despite the best efforts of charities, some complaints cannot be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

The decision as to whether a complaint is vexatious will be taken by the Chief Executive in conjunction with an independent board / third party where necessary.

Other types of complaints, Age UK Lambeth has the right to refuse to accept. The following types of scenarios fall within this section, but the list is not exhaustive:

- Where the complaint is clearly vexatious: by someone who persists in making a complaint or demand when all reasonable attempts to resolve their concerns have been made,
- Is malicious in nature,
- Is discriminatory, i.e. racist, sexist, homophobic or evidence of other discriminatory attitudes,
- Where the complaint threatens or abuses Age UK Lambeth staff/volunteers,
- Events, gatherings, communications or social media posts that are created by clients but are not connected and/ or done on behalf of Age UK Lambeth,
- A complaint against a partner or stakeholder that does not involve Age UK Lambeth.

When the decision has been taken to apply this section to a complainant, the Chief Executive will contact the complainant in writing to explain:

- Why Age UK Lambeth has taken the decision.
- What action we are taking, and the duration of that action.
- Explain the complainant has the right to contact the Charity Commission.

## **6. Compliments and Feedback Procedure**

Age UK Lambeth welcomes compliments and feedback with respect to our services.

All compliments are recorded on our CRM, Podio and where appropriate they are shared with the wider Age UK Lambeth Team. For transparency, these are shared via our internal communications.

The compliments will also be analysed and form part of our quality assurance process.

## **7. Contact Details**

We value all feedback and welcome the opportunity to learn and improve. The quickest way to share feedback or raise a complaint is via our online form. [Click this link to be directed to the form here](#)

Or they can be directed to:

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Brixton,  
SW2 5SG

**Tel:** 0207 346 6800

**Email:** [info@ageuklambeth.org](mailto:info@ageuklambeth.org)