

Complaints and Compliments

Key details

Policy reviewed by:	Paul Coles
Approved on:	
Next review date:	

At Age UK Lambeth (AUKL), we strive to provide the best possible service 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.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that complaints are treated as a means of addressing problems and as an opportunity to improve the quality of our services. You should feel confident in the knowledge that the complaints or concerns raised will be dealt with promptly, efficiently and openly, in a fair manner and that the complaints procedure is effectively implemented and consistently applied.

AUKL learns from all complaints and compliments and ensures that this is reflected in our Development Plans.

Policy Statement

AUKL seeks to resolve all complaints about its services in an effective and timely manner by working with individual complainants to find a resolution. AUKL endeavours to resolve complaints more effectively by responding personally, positively and promptly.

We will deal with complaints in a fair and transparent way, treating those who make them with courtesy and respect.

To ensure equality of access to the complaint's procedures we will:

- Provide interpretative support
- Ensure meetings are held in accessible locations
- Provide the appropriate support for complainants with hearing loss or who are deaf.

- Identify agencies to support clients with mental health issues/learning difficulties in raising their complaint.

AUKL welcomes the opportunity to learn and continuously improve our services.

Duty of Candour

AUKL aim for this process to empower the complainant in raising a complaint freely in the knowledge that they 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.

The Procedure

Records

AUKL keeps a record of both verbal and written complaints in our Feedback and Complaints folder on our Customer Relationship Management system including all evidence and any investigations carried out. Complainants have the right to access any information recorded about them, as required under the Data Protection Act, and to be assured that any information kept by AUKL is only seen by those with a legitimate need to know. This includes AUKL's Board which delegates this responsibility to the Operations Sub-Committee

Verbal Complaints

AUKL treats all complaints seriously and the staff member who receives the complaint will endeavour to solve the problem immediately. If the staff member cannot solve the problem, then they should aim to pass the caller on to their Manager/Deputy Chief Executive or to take sufficient information to leave a message for the manager. All staff will remain calm and respectful, whilst treating the complainant in a polite courteous and client-focused manner.

After the problem has been discussed, either the member of staff dealing with the problem or the Manager/Deputy Chief Executive will suggest a course of action/s. If the suggested course of action is acceptable, this will be confirmed in writing. If the suggested course of action is not acceptable then the Manager/Deputy Chief Executive will ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing.

Written Complaints

When AUKL receives a written complaint, it will be passed to the Deputy Chief Executive who will record it on the Feedback and Complaints Folder, and send a

letter of acknowledgement within five working days. The Deputy Chief Executive is the named person who deals with all written complaints.

The complaint will be fully investigated by the Deputy Chief Executive and any further information required will be obtained. AUKL will resolve any written complaint within 28 working days. However, if we cannot resolve the complaint within this timeframe, we will keep in contact with the complainant during the investigation advising of any progress until the investigation is complete.

The Deputy Chief Executive will endeavour to meet with the complainant during the investigation to gather as much information as possible and the CEO will also speak or meet with the complainant at the end of the investigation to advise of the outcome. A written report detailing the outcome of the investigation will be sent to the complainant.

Appeal Process

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, an appeal can be lodged with the Chief Executive of AUKL who will review the investigation of the complaint and will endeavour to resolve any outstanding issues. Copies of the complaint will be kept in the AUKL complaint file.

Right to refuse to accept a complaint

A vexatious complainant is someone who persists in making a complaint or demand when all reasonable attempts to resolve their concerns have been made.

AUKL has the right to refuse to accept a complaint:

- 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
- Is racist
- is sexist,
- Is homophobic
- or is evidence of other discriminatory attitudes,
- or where the complaint threatens or abuses Age UK Lambeth staff/volunteers.

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.

When the decision has been taken to apply this policy 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
- The duration of that action
- and the right of the complainant to contact the Charity Commission.
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Compliments Procedure

AUKL welcomes compliments received with respect to our services.

All compliments will be recorded and kept on file. We would pass on compliments to our staff. For transparency, compliments are shared with staff via our internal communications.

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

Organisation Contact

For lodging a complaint or seeking clarification about our complaints process, please contact:

Deputy Chief Executive

Age UK Lambeth,

10 Acre Lane,

Brixton,

SW2 5SG

Tel: 0333 360 3700

Email: info@ageuklambeth.org