

# COMPLIMENTS, REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

**March 2026**

Version:	5
Date ratified:	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
Name of owner/author:	This policy has been adapted for Age UK Mid Mersey by Shelley Brown, Director of Operations, with the permission of the CEO and Board of Trustees
Next Review date:	Mar 2029
Target audience:	All Staff

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Document Control				
Revision History				
Issue	Status	Date	Author	Description of Changes
1	Closed	May 10	Carol Verey	New Procedure
2	Closed	Oct 15	Shelley Brown	Amendments to process for raising a complaint – now all dealt with in first instance by Senior Management Team
3	Closed	May 2019	Shelley Brown	No amendments, scheduled review, still fit for purpose
4	Closed	May 22	Shelley Brown	No amendments, scheduled review, still fit for purpose
5	Open	Mar 25	Shelley Brown/Rachel McKernan	Replaced “users” with “Clients” as this is how the Charity refers to those who use our services. Included section on ‘representations’.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Age UK Mid Mersey (the Organisation) is committed to offering the best possible service to our clients and we regard compliments, representations and complaints as important tools to help monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of the service we give to our clients, their families and their carers.

The Compliments, Representations and Complaints policy and procedure is part of the process of empowering clients and protecting their interests.

Many clients find it difficult to express worries, problems and concerns and it is therefore imperative that they should feel they can easily make representations or complain, without any recriminations, if they are unhappy with the standard of our service.

Providing clients with a simple and accessible way to express their dissatisfaction directly to us also reduces the likelihood of them seeking other ways to express dissatisfaction.

## 2. PURPOSE

AUKMM actively welcomes all feedback, whether positive and negative, so that we can improve our services. We regard any representation or complaint as an opportunity to turn a negative experience into a positive one and to learn from the experience of our beneficiaries and partners.

### Compliments are valued because:

- It is helpful to hear what people think about our organisation and the services we provide
- They give valuable insights for setting service standards and monitoring quality
- Staff and volunteers are encouraged when they are complimented on their work.

If positive feedback is received about any aspect of the organisation, we will endeavour to share it with all those involved. We are also required to report positive feedback to some service commissioners. To this end we have an organisational compliments tracker where individual staff members can log any compliments or positive comments,

### Representation and complaints are valued because:

- They provide us with an opportunity to put things right and make positive changes
- They give valuable insights for setting higher service standards and monitoring and improving quality

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When we receive representations or complaints, we will do our utmost to remedy the situation, following this policy and outlined procedure, ensuring that clients are kept informed at every stage of the process.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy relates to feedback about the activities, employees and volunteers of the Organisation. A representation or complaint can be made about any area of our work, policy or performance. We recognise this could encompass customer services issues, fulfilment of our commitments, and staff or volunteer behaviours amongst other things.

Anyone can provide feedback or make a representation or complaint, including service clients, their family members, their carers, our volunteers, other service providers, delivery partners or members of the public.

It is important that everyone involved in the provision of services and activities including board members, staff, and volunteers know about the procedures for providing feedback and/or making a complaint and are committed to the principle of service quality that this policy and procedure embraces.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

#### **COMPLIMENT:**

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction, thanks, praise or congratulations made by a client in relation to the service or support they have received.

#### **REPRESENTATION:**

Representations are comments made by clients in respect of the service they have received or the experience they have had when engaging with the organisation.

Representations may comprise:

- Comments that are neutral observations or suggestions
- Comments that express dissatisfaction (for example expressing a dislike for an activity at a social group). These are concerns that require consideration and possibly action. They are not necessarily complaints but may become a formal complaint if not resolved satisfactorily.

#### **COMPLAINT:**

A complaint is a formal written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction regarding the organisation's services, or activities that require the organisation to account for its performance. A complaint could also be the outcome of a representation which the client does not feel has been appropriately addressed in the first instance.

Compliments, representations or complaints may be made by way of a letter, telephone call, email, card or conversation with any staff member or volunteer.

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## 5. OUR APPROACH TO ENCOURAGING FEEDBACK

The Organisation wants to encourage clients to make suggestions and wants to consult with them on proposed changes in methods of service delivery. This is not only good practice, but the commissioners expect funded organisations to actively seek feedback about the services it provides.

The Organisation has the following systems in place to receive feedback from clients:

- Lived Experience Panel
- Regular evaluations
- On-going openness to receiving feedback from clients by making our “Your Voice Matters” leaflet widely available to all clients.

## 6. OUR APPROACH TO ADDRESSING DISSATISFACTION AND RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

If someone is dissatisfied with any aspect of our activities, they have a right to tell us or to make a formal complaint. We commit to dealing with representations and complaints courteously, seriously, efficiently and openly as far as is compatible with our duty of confidentiality to clients.

AUKMM operates a three-stage procedure for addressing dissatisfaction:

- Stage 1 – Representations: the informal stage
- Stage 2 – Complaint: The formal stage
- Stage 3 - The review stage – if a complaint has not been successfully resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction

Explanations of each stage are detailed in our procedure found at point 8.

Representations of dissatisfaction and complaints should be responded to in a timely fashion, in line with our procedure, demonstrating the value we place on the client’s experience:

We understand that raising a complaint is not always easy and so we welcome the complainant having an advocate or friend representing their interests. The advocate will need to show that the complainant has requested their help. At any stage of the procedure the advocate may speak on the complainant’s behalf.

Assistance will be offered, where necessary, in explaining, interpreting or translating this procedure.

## 7. USING FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS TO IMPROVE QUALITY

To inform quality improvement activity we will keep detailed records of all complaints and their outcomes. In addition, we will maintain the following:

- A compliments log

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- A register of complaints as part of the Organisation’s Incident Log.

These are reviewed at each Quality Review meeting along with a report of representations contained within Charity Log. Key findings and recommendations are included in the quality improvement plan and reported to the Board of Trustees.

## **8. AGE UK MID MERSEY’S COMPLIMENTS, REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

We actively seek the views of our those who engage with our organisation as it informs our continuous service improvement activities. All staff and volunteers should encourage clients to provide their feedback on our services and activities and there are several ways in which they can do this as explained in “Your Voice Matters” leaflet.

This procedure explains how we will respond to feedback whether positive or negative,

### **8.1 Receiving compliments:**

A compliment may be received as verbal feedback or in written form, by way of a letter, email or card.

#### **Responding to verbal compliments:**

Verbal compliments are most likely to be received during an interaction between a staff member and a client and should be captured in the recording of the client’s contact notes (if appropriate).

The compliment should also be logged on the organisation’s compliments log which can be found from the SharePoint Homepage or via this link [Compliments Log](#). This does not need to be detailed but enables management to report on compliments received and locate these in Charity Log if needed.

#### **Responding to written compliments:**

Any card, letter or note expressing thanks or paying compliments should be scanned and uploaded to the client’s case file and categorised as “comments and compliments”. The compliment should also be logged on the [Compliments Log](#).

Logging compliments is important as it enables us to track and monitor compliments over a period, feeding into our service quality reviews. It also enables us to report to commissioners.

### **8.2 Receiving representations of dissatisfaction or complaints**

Clients will most likely raise issues, concerns or complaints directly to the member of staff or volunteer who is supporting them or the activity they are attending.

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It is important that all concerns, issues or complaints are responded to in line with the following three stage procedure:

- Stage 1 – Representations: the informal stage for resolving concerns, issues or expressions of dissatisfaction
- Stage 2 – Complaint: The formal stage
- Stage 3 - The review stage – if a complaint has not been successfully resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction.

### **STAGE 1 – Representations - the informal stage**

Representations of dissatisfaction should be addressed immediately where possible by the staff member/volunteer responsible for that client.

If this is not possible, the issue/concern should be addressed as soon as possible by an appropriate member of staff – usually the volunteer’s key worker, or staff member’s manager. The team member receiving the representation should advise the client that an appropriate team member will contact them to discuss the issue or concern within two working days.

We will aim to understand the issue and resolve the matter to the Client’s satisfaction as quickly as possible

The “We Value your views” form [Link to form here](#) should be used to capture the issue or concern, and this should be uploaded to the clients Charity Log record and categorised as “Issue/Concern Representation”

If the form is not available at the time the client should be advised that we will make a record of their concern/issue and how we will address it, and this will be stored in line with our Privacy Notice. The client’s consent for this should be obtained verbally. The form can then be completed and uploaded at a later date. It is important that the form is completed and uploaded as this will allow the organisation to track representations in the system and identify any key issue’s themes or repeated issues emerging

A record of the contact during which the issue was raised and discussed should also be made on the client’s Charity Log record along with any agreed resolution.

The client should be advised that they can make a formal complaint at any point and provided with a copy of our “Your Voice Matters” Leaflet.

If the issue or concern is not addressed to the client’s satisfaction than the client should be supported to move to stage 2, and make a formal Complaint

### **STAGE 2 – THE FORMAL STAGE**

Formal complaints will be acknowledged in writing by a member of our Organisational Management Team within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint. It will be addressed within the timescales stated within our procedure.

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The complaint will be managed by the most appropriate Service Manager/Area Lead, with support from the Chief Executive or their nominated deputy.

The investigating manager/area lead will be responsible for undertaking the investigation and in deciding what action should be taken.

To support the process the “complaints investigation” form [Complaints Investigation Form](#) Useful documents\AUKMM Complaints Form - Staff to complete.docx" should be used to record the process. Once completed this should be uploaded to the clients Charity Log record with the document classification of “complaint”. The complaint should also be logged on the organisation’s incident log [Incident Log](#) so that the Exec Board can monitor progress of the complaint investigation.

The investigating manager will speak to the client (or their representative or advocate) to fully understand the circumstances of the complaint and what the client would like the outcome of their complaint to be.

If a complaint is received about the work or conduct of a volunteer, they will be informed and asked to provide their version of events. If the complaint is upheld support and/or training will be given to help correct the activity or conduct that has caused the issue. If the complaint is not upheld, and if required and/or appropriate support will be given to the staff member/volunteer to enable them to maintain an ongoing relationship with the client.

The Complainant will be informed of the outcome of their complaint by the investigating manager, and this will be followed up in writing. The outcome should be provided within 20 working days of the complaint being received. There is scope within the procedure – in exceptional circumstances where a complaint is very complex – to allow more time for the investigation to be undertaken.

Every effort will be made to ensure the decision is understood by the complainant and, if possible, accepted. The Complainant has a right to appeal if he/she remains dissatisfied with the outcome and the organisation’s written response should communicate this to the Complainant.

If the outcome is accepted by the complainant, the complaint should be closed on the incident log and the complaint record uploaded to the Client’s charity log record after being signed off by the Chief Executive.

### **STAGE 3 – APPEAL STAGE**

If the Complainant does not agree with the decision/outcome at Stage 2, they can appeal within 28 calendar days of receiving the decision.

An appeal must be made in writing to the Chief Executive. Receipt of the appeal will be acknowledged within 5 working days from the day the correspondence was received. The Chief Executive or their nominated deputy will review the

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complaint record to date and arrange a meeting of a review panel (including a minimum of 1 Trustee and other suitable person's appointed by the Board of Trustees), within a further 10 working days, unless a later date is requested by the Complainant.

The purpose of the review panel is to give the Complainant the opportunity to have their complaint heard by a group of people who have not been involved at any other stage of the process. The appeal panel will consider documents from Stages 1 and 2 and anything further the Complainant or staff may have submitted. They will then hear what the Complainant has to say and will interview any relevant staff or volunteers.

The complainant is welcome to have their representative/advocate attend the panel to support them or to speak on their behalf

The panel will consider their recommendation, which shall be communicated to the Complainant at the time if practical and/or confirmed in writing within 5 working days. Thereafter, the Chief Executive will communicate to the Complainant what further action will be taken within 20 working days following this (where this has not already been done).

The decision of the panel will be final. The Chief Executive will be responsible for finalising the complaint record, updating the incident log and saving the complaint to the client's Charity Log record.

An independent adjudicator could be involved if the matter remains unresolved. The Organisation will make every effort to comply with their decision but cannot be legally bound by it.

## **FLEXIBILITY**

This procedure is intended to give client's clarity over the process and timelines for responding to their concerns or complaints. However, there may be occasions when earlier stages of the procedure should be bypassed. Where serious allegations are made, the Chief Executive will need to be involved at the outset. In addition, timelines may be extended to ensure that complex investigations can be completed effectively. In this case the client should be informed of the revised timelines in which we will formally respond to their complaint.

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**9. MONITORING/REVIEW**

Age UK Mid Mersey shall review this policy every three years, or sooner as required to ensure compliance with changes in employment law, equality and diversity legislation and changes within the Organisation.

All changes will be approved and implemented by the Chief Executive Officer

Signed in absence of CEO with delegated deputising authority

Print Name: Shelley Brown

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Signed: 