

COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

POLICY: COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

ISSUE NO: 6

ISSUED: May 2022

REVIEW: May 2025

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This Policy and Procedure applies to all areas of Age UK North Tyneside Group, all customers, staff, volunteers, trainees and visitors.

THIS POLICY COVERS:

- 1. Customer Comments
- 2. Customer Compliments
- 3. Customer Complaints
- 4. Complaint Reporting
- 5. Complaint Handling and Control
- 6. Unresolved Complaints
- 7. Review of Complaints

PURPOSE

The Group is committed to provide a high standard of service delivery to all our customers, (whether internal or external customers) to ensure that their experience of Age UK North Tyneside is a valued one. Where there is an issue with a service, quality, availability or general environment problem, not meeting the expectations or requirements of our customers, a consistent and thorough response needs to be initiated with decisions and actions to prevent any re-occurrence.

This Policy and Procedure has been established to ensure that all customer comments, compliments and complaints are reported to a central point, recorded and monitored in a standard format and that all complaints if necessary will be investigated and closely monitored to ensure a satisfactory conclusion is achieved.

The Head of Corporate Support is responsible for producing an annual analysis of comments, compliments and complaints received to present to the Chief Executive at the Quality Management Review Meeting.

POLICY STATEMENT

Age UK North Tyneside believes that if a customer wishes to make a comment, compliment or register a complaint they should find it easy to do so. It is our Group's policy to welcome comments, compliments and complaints and looks upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services. This policy is intended to ensure that comments, compliments and complaints are acknowledged, dealt with properly and are taken seriously.

Age UK North Tyneside believes that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems, customer dissatisfaction and possible litigation. The Group supports the concept that complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted between the complainant and the Group.

The aim of this Policy is to ensure that its Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure is effectively implemented and that customers feel confident that their comments, compliments and complaints are recognised, acknowledged, listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly where required and if appropriate.

- Customers and their representatives are aware of how to make comments, compliments and complaints and that the Group provides easy to use opportunities for them to register these.
- The Head of Corporate Support is responsible for the administration of the procedure.
- Every written complaint is acknowledged within 48 hours of receipt of the complaint and the investigation commenced within 5 working days.
- All complaints are responded to in writing by the Group.
- Comments and complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly, sensitively with due regard to the worry and upset that they can cause to both staff and customers.
- All complaints are monitored quarterly and trends are analysed to identify areas for service improvement.

Age UK North Tyneside has also produced a Guidance for Customers wanting to make a complaint which guides you through the whole process and explains your right to complain, how to make a complaint, who can help you make a complaint, what support is available, what you should consider prior to making a complaint and what to do if you are not happy with the outcome.

PROCEDURE

This procedure describes the actions to be taken by the Group when there are positive or negative views, improvement suggestions from customers or their representatives.

1. Customer Comments

Definition of a comment: *a remark, observation or criticism that may require immediate action but does not require a full investigation.*

Enables us to know your thoughts on what we could do better. The Head of Corporate Support records the details of all comments received to a central Register and then pass them on to the Department concerned so that they can look at how improvements can be made.

2. Customer Compliments

Enables us to know when we are getting things right. Any compliment received is shared with the relevant Department and recorded on the Compliments Register.

If the compliment is about an individual staff member they are then informed in writing by the Line Manager and a copy of the compliment and letter is stored in their Personnel File.

Compliments can help us share good practice and improve services.

3. Complaint Reporting

Definition of a Complaint: *An expression of dissatisfaction, whether verbal or written, and whether justified or not and which requires further investigation*

- If you *verbally* receive a formal complaint, complete the AUK184 form and forward it to the Head of Corporate Support along with any supporting documentation.
- If you receive a complaint through *email or letter*, please email the Head of Corporate Support to inform her of the complaint and send the original documents in internal mail.
- Please report the complaint by email the day you receive it and forward any documentation by internal mail the same working day too.
- All formal complaints should be forwarded to the Head of Corporate Support in this way.
- As a minimum if available the email details should include :
 1. Date of Complaint.
 2. Name, Address, Email address and Telephone Number of the complainant.
 3. Name of staff who is reporting the complaint.
 4. Brief overview of the nature of the complaint.
 5. The AUK004 form if the complaint is received verbally should be completed fully with a full description of the complaint.

4. Complaint Handling and Control

- On receipt of the email and any supporting documentation the Head of Corporate Support will review and complete appropriate sections of the AUK184 form (if relevant) and then update the Complaints Register. The Complaints Register is kept on the Leadership Team section of the server and details:
 - Date of Complaint
 - Area where complaint or issue occurred.
 - Type of Complaint.
 - Name of Complainant and contact details.
- Within the next working day of notification of the complaint the Head of Corporate Support will review the complaint and if necessary discuss with the relevant Head of Department and will appoint someone to investigate the complaint fully and impartially.
- An acknowledgement letter will be sent out within 48hours from the Head of Corporate Support to the complainant acknowledging receipt of their complaint and informing them that an Investigation (if relevant) will be carried out.
- If the complaint can be answered without further investigation the Head of Corporate Support will respond to the complainant having discussed the issue if necessary with the Service Manager.
- The outcome of the investigation or response is logged on the Complaints Register and the complaint is closed after 7 days if no further correspondence received.

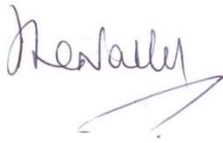
5. Unresolved Complaints

- If, at any time the complainant is unhappy with an investigation of the complaint or the response, the complaint shall be referred to the Chief Operating Officer in the first instance.
- In the event that the complainant is still unhappy, the complaint will be passed directly to the Chief Executive for further investigation and review. The Chief Executive acts as the final arbiter for any complaints received.
- All correspondence shall be attached to the original complaint and filed by the Head of Corporate Support.

6. Overview of Complaints

- All customer complaints are subject to trend analysis and shall be measured by the Head of Corporate Support on an annual basis and reported to the Quality Management Review Committee who review all complaints to ensure that any corrective actions taken are appropriate and effective.
- The Group Risk & Compliance Committee review all complaints annually and report to the full Board of Trustees

Authorised by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn McNally', with a long, sweeping underline stroke.

Dawn McNally
Group Chief Executive

The Age UK North Tyneside Group strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all, both as an employer and a provider of services. This policy has therefore been equality impact assessed by the Head of Corporate Support to ensure fairness and consistency for all those covered by it regardless of their individual differences

See Flowchart below for Customer Complaint Notification Procedures

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES CUSTOMER COMPLAINT

Receiving

Complaint received. Staff member emails HoCS the same day with contact details and brief description of complaint.

If complaint received verbally it must be sent to the HoCS the same working day using AUK184 Form. If complaint received in writing it must be sent to the HoCS the day of receipt

The HoCS reviews the Complaint and updates Complaints Register within one working day of receiving the complaint.

The HoCS reviews complaint and agrees response. If investigation is required the HoCS appoints an investigator

If complaint requires investigating an acknowledgement letter/email is sent to the complainant. If no investigation required a response is sent within 7 working days by the HoCS

Recording

All documentation including AUK184, complaint email or letter and response are logged and stored in Complaints File by the HoCS

Target is to send a response to complainant within 7 working days. After a further 7 working days if no response received the file is classed as "CLOSED"

The HoCS files all information and stores for 2 years.

The HoCS presents full Register at Quality Management Review Meeting to show relevant trends and key issues and resolutions

The HoCS presents annual report of all complaints to Group Risk & Compliance Committee who informs the full Board of Trustees