

# COMPLAINTS POLICY



Age UK Surrey (AUKS) needs to be aware of its customers'/users' needs. Part of this process will arise from customer satisfaction surveys.

The complaints policy enables staff, volunteers and Trustees to monitor and improve performance and relationships with our users and customers to:

- protect the interests of individual service users;
- provide continuous improvement of the quality of services provided by the organisation by being responsive to the views of people affected by its services;
- enable users, potential users and carers to challenge what may appear to be arbitrary decisions;
- protect staff and volunteers from the, possibly unfair, consequences of an arbitrary response when dealing with complaints on an ad hoc basis;
- provide an additional means of monitoring the performance of the organisation;
- provide a key knowledge base to improve future policy and decision making;
- maintain a customer care philosophy within the organisation.

## Procedure

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about AUKS's actions, or lack of action, the standard of service, or where a concern has been previously raised with the charity and was not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

The key element is that a complaint should be resolved, as far as possible, at source and the complainant encouraged to discuss his/her complaint. It is incumbent upon all staff to try to help and ascertain whether there may have been a misunderstanding.

### 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, sympathetic and understanding way.

All complaints, whether made orally or in writing, are to be recorded on the Complaints Form (Appendix A) and must be acknowledged within five working days of being made. The complainant must be contacted and told who is looking into the complaint, what action is being taken and when a reply can be expected. When a complaint has been resolved the result should also be recorded on the Complaints Form.

The person against whom the complaint has been made should be included in this process.

All Complaints Forms and associated papers are to be dealt with, and retained, under confidential cover by the Chief Executive.

### 2. Receiving a further complaint – Stage 2

Where the complaint is sufficiently serious for the member of staff to feel unable to handle it themselves and/or if the complainant is not satisfied by the handling of the complaint, the matter should be referred to the staff member's Line Manager, who should follow the procedure above.

### 3. Complaint to the CEO – Stage 3

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of his/her complaint, the matter should be referred to the Chief Executive.

If attending an appointment to discuss the complaint with the Chief Executive, the complainant may bring another person as support.

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

### 4. Final appeal to the Board Chair

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they should contact the Chair who will report to the complainant within 15 days of having received the appeal. The Chair's decision is final.

### 5. Complaint regarding the CEO

In the event of a complaint regarding the CEO, the Chair will appoint a Trustee to consider the complaint. If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the matter should be referred to the Chair. The Chair's decision is final.

## Complaints about Other Organisations

Complaints about the National Health Service, or other statutory authorities, should not be dealt with by AUKS but referred to the authority concerned.

Complaints about another Age UK member organisation should be referred to the Chief Executive, who would refer the matter back to the organisation concerned. AUKS would, however, monitor the progress of such complaints and advise the member organisation concerned about good practice where it does not have procedures in place.

## Review of Complaints

All complaints about activities within the Charity are reported to the Chief Executive who reports on them at each Board meeting. Feedback on complaints is considered at Leadership Team meetings and, if appropriate, passed to Services meetings to be used in service reviews and planning.

## Compliments and Suggestions

All compliments and suggestions about AUKS are recorded in Salesforce. Any comments or suggestions should be passed to a Line Manager for consideration by the Chief Executive. Compliments are reported to the Board by the Chief Executive.

Review - This procedure will be reviewed every three years.

Issue	Date agreed by Board of Age UK Surrey	Reviewed
2	5 <sup>th</sup> April 2011	April 2014
3	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2014	Sept 2017
4	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2017	July 2019
5	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	May 2023
	<b>Date agreed by Governance Committee of Age UK Surrey</b>	
6	2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2023	

**APPENDIX A – Complaints Form**

Ref	Complaint	Date Raised	By Who	Contact within 5 days	Corrective Action	Completed