COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Age UK Buckinghamshire works with and for older people living within Buckinghamshire to provide high quality services. To help ensure that we maintain high standards we actively seek feedback from our service users and invite input into service development. Additionally, because sometimes things do go wrong, we have developed a complaints’ procedure.

WHAT CAN A COMPLAINT BE ABOUT?

Complaints can cover any aspect of Age UK Buckinghamshire’s work:

- Any activity
- Any service
- The conduct of any member of staff or volunteer
- Any other matter

SUPPORT WITH A COMPLAINT

The service user has the right to be accompanied by a friend, relative, or social advocate at any stage of the complaints process.

THE PROCESS

When a member of staff, volunteer or agent visits a client in their own home to deliver a service, the client is given information detailing how they can make any comments, suggestions or complaints about the service they receive from us.

HOW TO COMPLAIN

Service users are actively encouraged to contact us if they have a complaint. The reason for this is twofold: unless we know something has gone wrong we cannot make amends, nor can we prevent something similar happening in future; it gives us the chance to investigate all the circumstances and to safeguard the reputation of the organisation.

In the first instance the complainant should talk to the staff member, volunteer or agent with whom they have regular contact. If, however, the service user prefers not to do this, then they should speak to the relevant project manager or service manager, either by telephone or by making a confidential appointment to meet the manager. This meeting can take place at the Age UK Buckinghamshire’s offices in Aylesbury, or, if preferred, at the service user’s home. Notes/Minutes should be recorded and agreed at the meeting.

Hopefully, at this stage, the matter can be resolved.

TAKING THE COMPLAINT FURTHER

Following a discussion or meeting with the service manager, if the service user is not satisfied, the complaint can be taken further. The complainant should put the complaint and the details of the
meeting with the service manager in writing, stating why they feel the matter is still unresolved, or why they still feel dissatisfied.

The letter should be marked “CONFIDENTIAL” and addressed to:

    The Chief Executive
    Age UK Buckinghamshire
    145 Meadowcroft
    Aylesbury
    Bucks HP19 9HH

An acknowledgement of the letter will be sent to the service user within 5 working days of receipt. The Chief Executive will, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, undertake to investigate the circumstances leading to the complaint and the result of investigations and actions taken will be notified to the service user within 25 working days.

**IF THE SERVICE USER IS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE WRITTEN RESPONSE**

If the service user is not satisfied with the written response received from the Chief Executive, they can appeal in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. An acknowledgement of the appeal will be sent to the complainant within 5 working days. The matter will be investigated by the Chairman and two other trustees; and the outcome notified to the complainant within 25 working days of receipt of the appeal request.

**IF THE SERVICE USER IS NOT SATISFIED BY THE RESULTS OF THE APPEAL**

If the service user is not satisfied with the results of the enquiry, they have the right to be heard by a review panel, led by an independent individual. This could, for instance, be a member of another voluntary organisation, or a member of a statutory authority. The other two members will be representatives from Age UK Buckinghamshire's Board of Trustees, neither of whom will have been members of the appeal panel.

The findings and outcome of this review panel will be final.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Throughout the entire complaints process full confidentiality will be maintained by all members of Age UK Buckinghamshire. Failure to maintain confidentiality with regard to a complaint or complainant will result in disciplinary action.