

## **COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS HANDLING POLICY**

**This policy details how we will deal with any compliments or complaints of a general nature. Where any complaint may raise issues with regard to the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults the matter must be dealt with in accordance with that policy.**

**Policy Statement: Age UK Derby and Derbyshire (AUKDD) aims to provide a high standard of service to its service users and to treat all service users and other members of the public with dignity, courtesy, fairness and efficiency. An important part of the service is the way we deal with complaints and compliments. We need to know about satisfaction and dissatisfaction with our service in order to resolve problems, to help us become more effective, or recognise good practice and give appropriate feedback.**

### **Introduction**

This procedure details how we resolve any complaints received. The “How we respond to complaints” document details the process we will follow and should be provided to everyone raising a concern.

To standardise our procedures and simplify monitoring, all compliments and complaints should be recorded on both an individual record and a summary form. Managers will wish to monitor both compliments and complaints on an ongoing basis and respond appropriately. A summary will be provided to the board of trustees and the process to enable this is detailed below.

### **Compliments**

We have extremely high levels of service user satisfaction and it is equally important that we record where a service user has taken the trouble to comment on how pleased they are with the service received. Recording of compliments allows managers to both thank staff closely involved for their commitment and note trends where particular things that we do are considered worthy of particular praise by service users.

### **Initial Complaints**

- If someone has a complaint about the quality of AUKDD services or about its policies, whoever takes the complaint will make them feel comfortable in first raising it.
- Our aim is that most complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at this stage. If not, complainants should be advised about the next stages of the complaints procedure.

- If the person raising the complaint does not wish to discuss the matter with a staff member they can write to the Chief Executive at Head Office, 29A Market Place, Heanor, Derbyshire, DE75 7EG.

### **Complaints received at sites other than Head Office**

- Each verbal complaint made by a client or other outside body should be responded to within 24 hours. Every effort should be made by the Project Co-ordinator/Service Manager to resolve the matter immediately. However, if this is not possible an indication of the action which is proposed and the likely timescales should be given.
- Any complaint made verbally, whether or not resolved satisfactorily should be recorded and detailed by the staff member who dealt with it, including the outcome.
- Each written complaint received should be acknowledged by the person receiving the complaint the same day. The line manager responsible for that member of staff/volunteer should be contacted immediately and made aware of the complaint. All actions should be recorded. Every effort should be made to resolve the matter immediately. However, if this is not possible, an indication of the action which is proposed and the likely timescales should be given.
- Where the likely solution to the complaint is outside the authority of the member of staff/volunteer a copy of the complainant's letter (or a summary of the verbal complaint) must be forwarded to the line manager (preferably by fax/email if possible) with whom the complaint should be discussed.
- Within 5 working days the line manager must issue a response to the complainant, either confirming the resolution, or advising that further investigations are taking place.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the line manager's response the matter must be referred to the Chief Executive for further consideration. The Chief Executive will reply to the complainant within 10 working days.

### **Written Complaints via Head Office**

- Any letter of complaint must be acknowledged in writing on the day of receipt and the complainant informed that his/her letter is being referred to the appropriate person for investigation and that an update will be provided within 5 working days. The Chief Executive will decide if the initial response should be made by the Project Leader/Service Leader or Head Office.
- The appropriate manager must investigate the complaint and within the 5 days period either provide a response or provide an update to the complainant together with the timescales envisaged before it will be possible to provide a full response. If the Chief Executive is to provide a response their findings should be provided to the Chief Executive.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the line managers response the matter must be referred to the Chief Executive for further consideration. The Chief Executive will reply to the complainant within 10 working days.

### **Telephone Complaints via Head Office**

- When a telephone complaint is received, a tactful attempt should be made to persuade the complainant to put the matter in writing in order to ensure a proper

understanding of the circumstances. Where this is not possible the complainant should be informed that the complaint will be referred to the appropriate person for investigation and an update will be provided within 5 working days. The Chief Executive will decide if the initial response should be made by the Project Leader/Service Leader or Head Office.

- The appropriate manager must investigate the complaint and within the 5 days period either provide a response or provide an update to the complainant, together with the timescales envisaged before it will be possible to provide a full response. If the Chief Executive is to provide a response their findings should be provided to the Chief Executive.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the line managers' response the matter must be referred to the Chief Executive for further consideration. The Chief Executive will reply to the complainant within 10 working days.

### **Appeal to Board of Trustees**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Chief Executive's response, they will have the opportunity of having the complaint considered by the Board of Trustees. The Chief Executive will present a report to the Trustees detailing the complaint. The Board of Trustees will be asked for a final decision. This will be forwarded to the complainant within 5 working days of the Trustees considering the complaint. The Chief Executive will ensure that any necessary action is taken.

### **Further Information**

If a complainant is not satisfied with our response and our internal process is complete, they may wish to contact one of the following: The Citizens Advice Bureau, a solicitor, a local Advice Agency, Councillor or MP.

### **Monitoring**

In addition to monitoring conducted by line managers and the Chief Executive, a summary report is provided to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis for organisational development purposes. Line managers should submit on the 30 September a copy of the Summary sheet together with copies of any Complaint/Compliment Records completed that year.