

## 02. Complaints

### 1. Purpose of Policy

- i. Not just meeting but striving to exceed our customer's expectations, Carers Link aims to provide high quality services delivered in a friendly, efficient and open manner.
- ii. However we acknowledge from time to time things may go wrong and we hope to continually improve our services by learning from mistakes and dealing with complaints efficiently and effectively. For any complaints we will therefore:
  - o Investigate the matter honestly, thoroughly and promptly
  - o Deal with it confidentially, objectively, fairly and effectively
  - o Accept responsibility and offer an apology if we are at fault
  - o Try to put things right, and to resolve, as far as we can, the complaint
  - o Use the lessons learned to improve our service.
- iii. The aim of this policy is therefore to describe:
  - o The principles we have applied to ensure fair use of the policy
  - o The process for making a complaint

### 2. Principles & Fair Use

- i. We will treat your complaint with courtesy, and any comment or complaint made will not adversely affect any services that we may provide.
- ii. We will acknowledge any complaints and requests for reviews of complaints within 24 hours of receipt (during normal working weeks) and will give a full response within 10 working days. If, exceptionally, our investigation takes longer than this we will write explaining why this is the case and when a response can be expected. In order to allow full investigations, complaints should be made within 6 months of the incident or circumstances that caused the complaint.
- iii. The Complaints procedure and reporting form will be made available on our website and made available to on-going users of our services within our Information Packs.
- iv. In addition to formal complaints, Carers Link welcomes any views on any aspects of our service. All suggestions will be welcomed and carefully considered.
- v. The complaints procedure is designed to highlight and address mistakes made or if service provision is not up to the required standard. It can also be used if we have failed to do something that we should have done or if we have acted unfairly, unethically or discourteously. The procedure cannot be used to complain about lack of service not within the remit of Carers Link, nor will it be used if the matter is the subject of legal or judicial proceedings or if the complainant is acting in a legal capacity.
- vi. Whilst Carers Link encourages people to feel able to complain and use this procedure, it is recognised that persistent complainers may require a different approach. These are complainers who persist in raising very minor or trivial complaints, or who continue to repackage their original complaint under the guise of a new complaint or who target different Staff or Volunteers throughout the organisation about the same complaint. Only the Board of Management may decide if these are vexatious complaints. If this is deemed to be the case, then a cut off point will be introduced after a careful review of the complainant's case to ensure there are no new issues.
- vii. Staff and Volunteers are reminded that separate **Grievance** and **Whistle-Blowing Procedures** are available should they wish to formally raise any issues or concerns. See Policies Q7 and SE18 for details.

### 3. How to Make a Complaint

- i. You can complain in writing, by phone, email, or in person. We have a standard form that you may find useful on our website: <http://carerslink.org.uk/contact-us/>. If you decide not to use the online form, please help us to give you a prompt and accurate reply by detailing:

- Your name, address, telephone number and/or e-mail address
  - What went wrong, when and where
  - If applicable, the name of any Staff, Student or Volunteers involved
  - What you want from your complaint
- ii. If you intend to visit, it will be necessary to agree a mutually convenient time so that the most appropriate person is able to deal with the problem. Similarly if phoning, the person you should speak to may not be readily available but will contact you at the first opportunity.
  - iii. Independent help in making a complaint may be available from a Citizens Advice Bureau or local advocacy or advice organisation such as Ceartas (telephone 0141 775 0433). Assistance may also be available from the Social Work Department or East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action (EDVA).

**4. The Process**

- i. **STAGE 1** – In the first instance, please contact the person you have been dealing with, who will try to resolve your complaint.
- ii. **STAGE 2** – If you do not want to do this or you are not satisfied with the outcome or the way in which the complaint was handled, you may contact the Chief Executive Officer. It would be helpful, if, at this stage, complaints could be in writing. However, if you prefer to contact the Chief Executive Officer by another method, we will still ensure your complaint is still fully reviewed.
- iii. The Chief Executive Officer will review all aspects of your complaint, including the way it has been dealt with, and will reply to you within 10 working days.
- iv. **STAGE 3** – If you are not satisfied with the Chief Executive Officer’s response, or your complaint involves the Chief Executive Officer, you may complain to the Board of Management. They will investigate the complaint and give you the outcome within 15 working days of receipt.
- v. If you are still unhappy or not satisfied at the end of this stage, we would be happy to discuss the possible use of an independent person or organisation as an arbitrator or mediator in an effort to fully resolve the situation.

**5. Policy Review**

- i. This Policy will be reviewed annually or as appropriate and in accordance with legislation.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
April 2004	Policy Created		Choose an item.
May 2006	Reviewed & Updated		Choose an item.
January 2009	Reviewed & Updated		Choose an item.
July 2011	Reviewed Only		Choose an item.
February 2013	Reviewed Only		Choose an item.
March 2014	Reviewed & Updated		Choose an item.
January 2015	Reviewed Only		Choose an item.
June 2015	Reviewed & Updated		Choose an item.
	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
	Choose an item.		Choose an item.