

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Introduction

Organisations develop complaints policies to handle efficiently any client concerns or complaints. Part of this process will also arise from customer satisfaction surveys. If handled the right way, a complaints policy enables staff and Trustees to monitor and improve performance and relationships with the public – our clients.

The purpose of Age Concern Petersfield's Complaints Policy is to:

- protect the interests of individual service users
- improve continuously the quality of services provided by this 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 this organisation
- provide a key knowledge-base to improve future policy and decision making.
- maintain a customer care philosophy within the organisation.

2. Procedure

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about Age Concern Petersfield'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.

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

2.2 Receiving a further complaint – Stage 2

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

2.3 Final appeal to the Board Chair – Stage 3

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

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

The Chair is obliged to put a decision, in writing, to the complainant within twenty eight days.

The Chair's decision is final.

2.4 Complaint regarding the Chair

In the event of a complaint regarding the Chair the Manager will appoint a Trustee to consider the complaint. The Trustees' decision is final.

3. Complaints about Other Organisations

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

4. Review of Complaints

All complaints about activities within the charity are reported to the Board.

POLICY STATEMENT

All Policies and Procedures held by Age Concern Petersfield & District are regularly reviewed and may be amended from time to time to reflect any changes in Legislation, regulatory guidance or internal policy decisions, as well as for any other reasons determined by the Board of Trustees. The latest versions will always be reflected on our website.

Appendix A - Complaints Form

Age Concern Petersfield
Comments / Problems / Complaints

Manager use only Complaint no:

Comment / Problem / Complaint

1 - Date received

2 - Made by

3 - Received by

4 - Description

5 – Action taken

Name	Date	Description of action

6 – Originator notified of outcome

Means of notification

By whom

Date