COMPLAINTS POLICY

PRN-28: Complaints Policy
Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd
Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
Email: admin@carehopes.com
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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all complaints, concerns, comments, and expressions of dissatisfaction are handled fairly, promptly, consistently, and transparently.

The organisation welcomes complaints as an opportunity to:

- Improve services.
- Learn from experiences.
- Identify areas for development.
- Strengthen service quality.
- Promote accountability.
- Improve outcomes for service users.

The organisation is committed to ensuring that individuals can raise concerns without fear of discrimination, retaliation, or negative consequences.

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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Service users
- Family members
- Carers
- Advocates
- Employees

- Volunteers
- Partner organisations
- Members of the public

This policy applies to complaints relating to:

- Service delivery
- Employee conduct
- Volunteer conduct
- Communication
- Organisational decisions
- Wellbeing support activities
- Community activities
- Confidentiality concerns
- Safeguarding practice
- Equality and inclusion matters

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3. Policy Statement

The organisation is committed to:

- Treating all complaints seriously.
- Resolving concerns as quickly as possible.
- Ensuring complaints are investigated fairly.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Learning from complaints.
- Improving services based on feedback.

Complainants will be treated with:

- Respect
- Courtesy
- Fairness
- Sensitivity

The organisation will not tolerate victimisation of anyone who raises a genuine concern.

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4. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about:

- A service provided.
- A failure to provide a service.
- The behaviour of an employee or volunteer.
- A decision made by the organisation.
- The quality of support received.
- The handling of information or communication.

Complaints may be made verbally or in writing.

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5. Principles of Complaint Handling

The organisation will ensure that complaints are:

Accessible

People should know how to complain.

Fair

Complaints will be handled impartially.

Responsive

Concerns will be acknowledged and investigated promptly.

Confidential

Information will be handled appropriately.

Person-Centred

The needs of the complainant will be considered.

Outcome-Focused

The aim is to resolve concerns and improve services.

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6. Who Can Make a Complaint?

Complaints may be made by:

- Service users
- Family members
- Carers
- Advocates
- Legal representatives
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Members of the public

Where a complaint is made on behalf of a service user, consent may be required unless there are safeguarding, legal, or capacity considerations.

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7. Support for Complainants

The organisation recognises that some individuals may require support to make a complaint.

Support may include:

- Information in accessible formats.
- Assistance completing forms.
- Advocacy support.
- Alternative communication methods.
- Translation or interpretation services where available.

No one should be disadvantaged because of disability, communication needs, language, or literacy difficulties.

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8. Informal Resolution

Many concerns can be resolved quickly through informal discussion.

Individuals are encouraged, where appropriate, to raise concerns with:

- The employee involved.
- The Volunteer Coordinator.

- The Service Manager.

Informal resolution may include:

- Explanation
- Clarification
- Apology
- Immediate corrective action

Informal resolution does not prevent a formal complaint being made.

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9. Formal Complaints Procedure

Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint may be submitted.

Complaints can be made:

In Writing

By letter or email.

Verbally

By telephone or in person.

Through a Representative

Where appropriate.

Complaints should include:

- Name and contact details.
- Description of the concern.
- Relevant dates.
- Individuals involved.
- Desired outcome.

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10. Complaint Handling Process

Stage 1: Receipt of Complaint

The complaint will be acknowledged within **5 working days**.

The acknowledgement will include:

- Confirmation of receipt.
- Name of investigating officer.
- Expected timescales.
- Information about the complaints process.

Stage 2: Investigation

The organisation will:

- Review the complaint.
- Gather relevant evidence.
- Interview appropriate individuals.
- Review records where necessary.
- Consider policies and procedures.

Investigations will be objective and proportionate.

Stage 3: Outcome

A response will normally be provided within **20 working days**.

The response may include:

- Findings.
- Conclusions.
- Actions taken.
- Recommendations.
- Apology where appropriate.

Where investigations require additional time, the complainant will be informed.

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11. Possible Outcomes

A complaint may be:

Upheld

The complaint is found to be justified.

Partially Upheld

Some elements of the complaint are substantiated.

Not Upheld

Insufficient evidence exists to support the complaint.

Regardless of outcome, lessons learned will be considered.

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12. Complaints Involving Safeguarding

Where a complaint includes allegations of:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Financial abuse
- Discriminatory abuse

The matter will immediately be considered under safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the Adult Safeguarding Policy.

Where necessary, referrals may be made to:

- Local Authority Safeguarding Team
- Police
- Appropriate professionals

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13. Complaints Involving Employees or Volunteers

Complaints about employees or volunteers may involve:

- Conduct concerns
- Professional boundaries
- Poor practice
- Communication issues

- Breach of policies

The organisation may investigate under:

- Complaints procedures
- Disciplinary procedures
- Volunteer management procedures

Appropriate action will be taken where concerns are substantiated.

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14. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be considered where sufficient information is available.

The organisation may not always be able to investigate fully if essential information is missing.

Anonymous complaints involving safeguarding concerns will always be taken seriously.

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15. Vexatious or Unreasonable Complaints

The organisation is committed to treating all complainants fairly.

However, where complaints are:

- Malicious
- Abusive
- Persistent without reasonable grounds
- Intended to harass

the organisation may take proportionate action to manage such situations.

This does not affect an individual's right to raise legitimate concerns.

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16. Appeals

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a review of the complaint outcome.

Appeals should normally be submitted within **20 working days** of receiving the outcome.

The appeal should explain:

- Why the decision is disputed.
- Any additional information.
- The outcome sought.

A senior manager or director not previously involved will normally review the complaint.

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17. Complaint Records

The organisation will maintain records of:

- Complaints received.
- Actions taken.
- Investigation findings.
- Outcomes provided.
- Lessons learned.

Records will be:

- Accurate
- Secure
- Confidential
- Retained in accordance with organisational procedures

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18. Learning from Complaints

The organisation views complaints as an opportunity to improve.

Learning may result in:

- Policy changes.
- Additional training.
- Improved communication.
- Service redesign.
- Risk assessment updates.
- Quality improvement initiatives.

Managers will monitor trends and recurring themes.

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19. Compliments and Feedback

The organisation welcomes positive feedback as well as complaints.

Compliments help identify:

- Good practice.
- Successful outcomes.
- Staff achievements.
- Volunteer contributions.

Positive feedback will be shared appropriately and used to encourage high standards.

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20. Whistleblowing and Complaints

Complaints should normally be used where dissatisfaction relates to services received.

Concerns involving:

- Fraud
- Corruption
- Serious misconduct
- Unsafe practice
- Cover-ups
- Criminal behaviour

may be raised through the Whistleblowing Policy.

Individuals raising concerns in good faith will be supported and protected from victimisation.

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21. Case Study

Scenario: Missed Wellbeing Visit

Mrs P's daughter complains that a scheduled companionship visit did not take place and no notification was provided.

Investigation

The Service Manager:

- Reviews records.
- Speaks with the volunteer.
- Confirms a communication failure occurred.

Outcome

The complaint is upheld.

Actions include:

- Formal apology.
- Improved scheduling procedures.
- Staff reminder regarding reporting missed visits.

Learning

Additional monitoring of visit schedules is introduced.

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22. Responsibilities

Directors

Responsible for:

- Oversight of complaint handling.
- Reviewing complaint trends.
- Supporting service improvement.

Managers

Responsible for:

- Investigating complaints.
- Maintaining records.
- Communicating outcomes.
- Implementing improvements.

Employees and Volunteers

Responsible for:

- Responding professionally to concerns.
- Cooperating with investigations.

- Learning from outcomes.
- Promoting open feedback.

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23. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The organisation will monitor:

- Number of complaints.
- Types of complaints.
- Complaint outcomes.
- Response times.
- Repeat complaints.
- Lessons learned.
- Service improvements implemented.

Complaint data will be reviewed regularly to support continuous improvement.

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24. Review Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following significant complaints
- Following safeguarding reviews
- Following legislative or regulatory changes
- Following service reviews

Related Policies

- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Incident Reporting Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection and GDPR Policy