Compliments Complaints and Feedback Handling Procedure

PRN-30: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Handling Procedure
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Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
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1. Purpose

This procedure provides practical guidance for receiving, recording, investigating, responding to, and learning from compliments, complaints, comments, suggestions, and feedback.

The organisation is committed to:

- Listening to service users and stakeholders.
- Responding fairly and promptly.
- Learning from experiences.
- Improving service quality.
- Supporting transparency and accountability.
- Promoting continuous improvement.

Feedback is viewed as a valuable opportunity to improve services and strengthen relationships with service users, families, volunteers, employees, and partner organisations.

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2. Scope

This procedure applies to:

- Service users
- Family members

- Carers
- Advocates
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Managers
- Directors
- Trustees
- External stakeholders

It applies to:

- Compliments
- Suggestions
- Concerns
- Complaints
- Service feedback

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3. Guiding Principle

Everyone has the right to:

- Be heard.
- Raise concerns.
- Make a complaint.
- Receive a fair response.
- Be treated with dignity and respect.

No individual will be disadvantaged for making a genuine complaint or providing honest feedback.

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4. Definitions

Compliment

A compliment is positive feedback about a service, employee, volunteer, or organisational activity.

Examples include:

- Expressions of appreciation.
- Thank-you letters.
- Positive survey responses.
- Verbal praise.

Concern

A concern is a matter causing dissatisfaction that may often be resolved quickly and informally.

Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction requiring a formal response.

A complaint may relate to:

- Service quality.
- Staff conduct.
- Volunteer conduct.
- Communication.
- Delays.
- Decisions made.
- Organisational practices.

Suggestion

A suggestion is an idea that may improve services, accessibility, participation, or service delivery.

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5. Who Can Raise Feedback?

Feedback may be provided by:

- Service users.
- Family members.

- Carers.
- Advocates.
- Volunteers.
- Employees.
- Members of the public.
- Partner agencies.

The organisation welcomes feedback from all stakeholders.

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6. How Feedback Can Be Raised

Feedback may be submitted through:

- Verbal discussions.
- Telephone calls.
- Email.
- Letters.
- Feedback forms.
- Surveys.
- Review meetings.
- Complaints forms.
- Organisational website (where applicable).

Accessible methods should be offered wherever reasonably practicable.

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7. Receiving Feedback

Any employee or volunteer receiving feedback should:

Step 1

Listen respectfully.

Step 2

Thank the individual.

Step 3

Clarify concerns if necessary.

Step 4

Record details appropriately.

Step 5

Pass information to the appropriate manager.

All feedback should be treated seriously.

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8. Informal Resolution

Some concerns may be resolved quickly through informal discussion.

Examples include:

- Communication misunderstandings.
- Administrative issues.
- Minor service concerns.

Managers should seek to:

- Listen carefully.
- Explain actions taken.
- Resolve concerns promptly.
- Record outcomes where appropriate.

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9. Formal Complaint Process

Where informal resolution is not appropriate or the individual wishes to make a formal complaint, the following process should be followed.

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10. Stage 1: Complaint Received

Complaints may be received verbally or in writing.

Upon receipt:

Acknowledgement

The complaint should normally be acknowledged within **5 working days**.

Recording

The complaint should be recorded in the Complaints Register.

Allocation

A manager should be assigned responsibility for handling the complaint.

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11. Complaint Information Required

Where possible, obtain:

- Name and contact details.
- Nature of complaint.
- Date(s) involved.
- Individuals involved.
- Desired outcome.
- Supporting evidence.

Support should be provided where individuals require assistance in making a complaint.

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12. Stage 2: Investigation

The complaint handler should:

Review Information

Consider all relevant information.

Gather Evidence

Review records and documentation.

Speak with Relevant Individuals

Where appropriate.

Consider Organisational Policies

Assess compliance with procedures.

Identify Findings

Determine whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.

Investigations should be objective and proportionate.

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13. Investigation Timescales

The organisation will aim to:

- Complete investigations within **20 working days** wherever possible.
- Keep complainants informed if delays occur.
- Explain reasons for any extended timescales.

Complex cases may require additional time.

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14. Stage 3: Complaint Outcome

A written response should normally include:

- Summary of complaint.
- Investigation conducted.
- Findings.
- Actions taken.
- Learning identified.
- Further review options.

Responses should be respectful, clear, and easy to understand.

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15. Complaint Outcomes

Possible outcomes include:

Upheld

The complaint is fully supported by evidence.

Partially Upheld

Some aspects are supported.

Not Upheld

Evidence does not support the complaint.

Resolved Informally

The matter has been satisfactorily resolved without formal investigation.

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16. Stage 4: Review Request

If dissatisfied, individuals may request a review.

The review should normally:

- Be conducted by a more senior manager or Director.
- Consider fairness of the original investigation.
- Review available evidence.
- Determine whether the outcome remains appropriate.

The review outcome will normally be final.

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17. Complaints Involving Safeguarding Concerns

If a complaint identifies potential:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Harm
- Safeguarding risks

The matter must immediately be referred through safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding investigations take priority over complaints processes when risk is present.

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18. Complaints Involving Employees or Volunteers

Where complaints involve employee or volunteer conduct:

- The matter should be investigated fairly.
- Relevant management procedures may be followed.
- Confidentiality should be maintained.
- The rights of all parties should be respected.

Complaint outcomes may lead to additional management action where appropriate.

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19. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be considered where sufficient information is available.

The organisation may:

- Investigate concerns.
- Monitor issues raised.
- Record findings.

Anonymous complaints may be more difficult to investigate fully.

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20. Recording Complaints

The Complaints Register may include:

- Reference number.
- Date received.
- Complainant details.
- Nature of complaint.
- Investigation status.
- Outcome.
- Actions taken.
- Date closed.

Records should be maintained securely.

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21. Receiving Compliments

Compliments should be:

- Recorded where appropriate.
- Shared with employees or volunteers involved.
- Used to identify good practice.
- Reported through quality assurance arrangements.

Recognition helps build a positive culture.

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22. Handling Suggestions and General Feedback

Suggestions should be:

- Logged appropriately.
- Considered by management.
- Discussed during service reviews where relevant.
- Used to support improvement planning.

Feedback does not need to constitute a formal complaint to be valuable.

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23. Learning from Complaints and Feedback

Managers should regularly review:

- Complaints trends.
- Recurring issues.
- Suggestions.
- Compliments.
- Survey findings.

Lessons identified should inform:

- Training.
- Policy reviews.
- Service improvements.
- Risk management.

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24. Supporting Complainants

Support may include:

- Accessible information.
- Advocacy support.
- Communication assistance.

- Alternative formats.
- Additional explanation of procedures.

The organisation aims to make the complaints process accessible to everyone.

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25. Confidentiality

Information relating to complaints should be:

- Handled confidentially.
- Shared only where necessary.
- Stored securely.
- Managed in accordance with data protection requirements.

Confidentiality may be limited where safeguarding or legal obligations apply.

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26. Complaints and Equality

The organisation will ensure that complaints procedures are:

- Fair.
- Accessible.
- Inclusive.
- Non-discriminatory.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where required.

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27. Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Flowchart

Feedback Received

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Concern, Complaint, Compliment, or Suggestion Identified

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Record Information

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Informal Resolution Possible?

Yes → Resolve → Record Outcome

No

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Formal Complaint Process

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Investigation

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Outcome Issued

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Learning Identified

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Service Improvement Actions Implemented

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Case Closed

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28. Case Study

Scenario: Dissatisfaction with Visit Times

A service user complains that planned companionship visits are frequently arriving later than expected.

Action Taken

- The complaint is acknowledged.
- Visit schedules are reviewed.
- Staff and volunteer availability is examined.
- The service user is kept informed throughout the investigation.

Outcome

Scheduling arrangements are improved and clearer communication procedures are introduced.

Learning Point

Complaints provide valuable opportunities to identify service improvements and enhance service user satisfaction.

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29. Responsibilities

Directors

Responsible for:

- Monitoring complaint trends.
- Ensuring fairness and transparency.
- Supporting organisational learning.

Managers

Responsible for:

- Handling complaints.
- Conducting investigations.
- Implementing improvements.
- Maintaining records.

Employees and Volunteers

Responsible for:

- Listening respectfully.
- Reporting feedback appropriately.
- Cooperating with investigations.
- Supporting service improvement.

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30. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The organisation will monitor:

- Number of complaints received.
- Investigation timescales.
- Complaint outcomes.
- Compliments received.

- Service user satisfaction.
- Improvement actions implemented.
- Recurring trends and themes.

Monitoring findings will be reported through quality assurance processes.

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31. Review Arrangements

This procedure will be reviewed:

- Annually.
- Following significant complaints.
- Following service reviews.
- Following legislative changes.
- Following identified learning outcomes.

Related Policies

- Complaints Policy
- Service User Participation and Feedback Policy
- Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Accessibility and Inclusive Communication Policy
- Records Management and Record Keeping Policy
- Data Protection and GDPR Policy