

		<b>Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedure C2</b>
<b>Date last reviewed:</b> February 2017	<b>Approved by the Board:</b> 24.11.2020	<b>Date of next Review:</b> 24.11.2022

## ***DURHAM COUNTY CARERS SUPPORT***

### **COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE C2**

This policy and procedure defines how to deal with any compliments, comments and complaints made by Carers who use our services or any external organisations or partners.

This policy does not confer any contractual rights.

**Definition of a complaint:** a complaint arises when an issue is brought forward that remains irreconcilable after discussion with a member of staff, and the party wants further action to be taken, and/or where there has been a (serious) breach of the Carers Centre Charter of Service Standards or Code of Conduct.

Compliments, comments and complaints will be welcomed, encouraged and valued by the Durham County Carers Support as a way of continuously improving services.

Staff and volunteers who have complaints regarding their employment must refer to the Grievance Procedure.

#### **General information and rules**

Information held in the Representation's file will be used for the planning of future services, and to ensure that the service users (carers) get the best quality service possible.

1. Complaints and compliments will be welcomed and encouraged from users of the service, partnership organisations, funders and from our own staff (though this procedure is separate from the Grievance & Disciplinary Procedure).
2. Comments will be dealt with fairly, and be kept confidential
3. Any person wishing to make a complaint may be supported or represented by a person of their choice.
4. Complainants will be kept informed of the course of their complaints, and of the action being taken throughout the procedure.

5. If the representation is directed at a particular member of staff, he/she will be given the opportunity to respond. Any correspondence relating to the representation will be available to all concerned unless it contains confidential information.
6. Durham County Carers Support operates an open access policy. Clients may look at their written files at any time, including during the representations procedure. (Please refer to Policy on Confidentiality)
7. All persons using the service must have access to the Representations Procedure. A user's leaflet will be made available and displayed to explain the operation of the Representations Procedure.

Where there may be a language or communication difficulty, the Carers Centre will make every effort to enable effective communication.

### **STAGE 1**

The staff member initially receiving any representation should establish whether the person wishes to make a complaint or compliment, and what action they would like the Centre to take:

1. Is it an issue that they wish to bring to the attention of the Manager without any further action to be taken other than it being recorded?
2. Is it a complaint that they wish to have formally investigated and subsequently resolved?

Failure by a member of staff to deal with complaints through the correct procedure will be viewed as a serious disciplinary matter.

The representation or complaint will be brought to the attention of the relevant Manager. It will be recorded in the Representations File on a recording form. Any person making a representation will receive written acknowledgement within five working days and a reply sent to the complainant within 28 days. If the representation is resolved and the user is satisfied with the outcome, no further action will be required and this should be recorded appropriately.

If the complaint is not resolved and the complainant is not satisfied then a formal investigation will be conducted (stage 2)

### **STAGE 2**

If the complainant is unhappy with the decision of the Manager, then the Strategic Development Manager will be informed within two working days.

The Strategic Development Manager will investigate the complaint and send a reply to the complainant within 28 days of the representation being made.

The outcome should be clearly marked stage 2 and filed in the representations file at Enterprise House, Enterprise City, Meadowfield Avenue, Spennymoor DL16 6JF

### **STAGE 3**

#### **Investigation by Board of Directors or independent representative**

1. If the person making the representation is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 2, he/she should register a further representation to the Chief Executive within another ten working days.
2. A panel of three Board Members, one of which will be the Chair or an independent representative (if appropriate), will review the complaint. The person making the complaint will be informed of a date at which they will be given the opportunity to present their complaint to the panel or independent representative. A representative of the Durham County Carers Support will also present the findings of the formal investigation on the same date.
3. The panel or independent representative will make a decision on whether the complaint is upheld. The Chief Executive or Deputy and Chair or independent representative, will decide what further action is appropriate (if any).
4. A further written response will then be sent to the complainant within twenty one days of the panels meeting, unless the Chair or independent representative wishes to verbally inform the parties of his/her decision and any further action if appropriate
5. Should any party invoke legal proceedings, use of the Comments and Complaints Procedure will be reviewed by the Chief Executive, who would decide to suspend the procedure until legal proceedings have finished

If the complainant is still unhappy with the service provided by the Charity, they have the right to complain to the appropriate funding body. This information will be provided, identifying the appropriate Organisation in the final written response to the complainant.

*Signature of the person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy:*



**Jenni Wood**  
**Chief Executive**

**Date:** 24.11.2020

*Approved by Board:*



**Audrey Vasey**  
**Chairman**

**Date:** 24.11.2020