

Complaints procedure explained

We hope that you will always be satisfied with the support we provide and look forward to receiving your comments. If we get it right or wrong we'd like to know.

Why do we need a complaints procedure?

Caring Together aims to provide a high quality, responsive service that puts the person we care for and their carers first in what we do. We hold a number of accreditations and registrations recognising the quality of the different aspects of our support, for example Care Quality Commission (CQC). We are keen to make sure we are upholding these standards and addressing any issues, should they arise. In order to ensure we do so, we need to take account of the views and wishes of those we are here to support.

We welcome every opportunity to monitor and improve our support. Having a complaints policy and a clear procedure for resolving complaints is one part of this.

If you wish to comment about our service, whether positively or negatively, we will be pleased to hear from you. You can also comment on or complain about the information, advice and guidance we provide to you. This information could have been received through a face-to-face conversation or could be in our publications or on our website.

Please don't be afraid that you may lose the service or that you will be thought of as a nuisance by complaining.

Who can make a compliment or complaint?

Anyone who comes into contact with staff, trustees or volunteers from Caring Together can make a compliment or complaint. By anyone, we mean carers and the people they care for, homecare clients, the families and friends of carers, other voluntary groups, statutory agencies and any member of the public.

What you can do

You can register a compliment or make a complaint in person, by telephone or in writing. If you wish you may use the assistance of a friend or relative in doing this, or you may prefer a member of staff to write it down for you in a way that is acceptable to you.

Informal complaints

Anyone who has a concern should initially raise this with a member of our staff at the time, as this enables us to respond and deal with an issue quickly. If you don't feel able to do this at the time then the formal complaint procedure should be used.

Any member of staff or volunteer, who is made aware of a concern will advise their line manager and will inform the complainant that their concern has been passed onto the relevant manager. We will seek to resolve this and meet any reasonable expectations the individual may have. If we are unable to, we will make a note of:

- The complainants name and contact details, unless he/she is unwilling to provide these
- The nature of his/her concern and anything that he/she wishes to be done about it
- The circumstances surrounding the complaint, including when, where and any action that has been taken, and the details of any others who were present/involved.

Formal complaints

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you should write, telephone or email:

Caring Together
Unit 4, Meadow Park
Meadow Lane
St Ives PE27 4LG
Phone: 01480 499090
Email: hello@caringtogether.org

To help resolve the complaint as quickly as possible, the individual making the complaint should do so as soon as possible and should include in it:

- Name, organisation (if relevant), address, telephone number and email.
- If you do not wish to be contacted in a particular way, please let us know and we will of course respect this.
- As much information as possible, such as what happened, where, when (date/time), who was present and any action taken, and by whom.
- What it is you felt to be unsatisfactory.
- What action you are seeking from us, if appropriate.

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days. A senior member of staff with the relevant experience and knowledge to consider the issue objectively and fully, will investigate the complaint. If necessary we will seek specialist advice. We will contact you should we need any further information or clarification.

On completion of the investigation, a response will be sent within 10 working days. If this is not possible, a holding reply will be sent after 10 days advising when we estimate the investigation will be complete and outline our findings with any actions taken, subject to the constraints of the Data Protection Act.

If you are not satisfied with the response you may appeal the decision to the chief executive at the address or telephone number on page 4 or by email to:

Email: ceo@caringtogether.org

The appeal should be specific about why you feel the decision made was wrong and provide the facts and information necessary to demonstrate this.

You will be notified of a decision within 28 days and it will be final.

Wider action

Irrespective of the outcome of any complaint, the line manager or investigating officer is to consider if there is any requirement in respect of wider action and/or statutory reporting to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), Charity Commission, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and other regulators, police or contract commissioner/grant funder.

Consideration will also be given to whether any changes should be made to policies, procedures, training, etc. to see if anything might reasonably be done to prevent a similar issue arising in future.

Complaints against the chief executive or board member

Complaints about the chief executive or a member of the board are to be sent to the chair of trustees, using the contact details above. The correspondence should be marked private and confidential.

Letters addressed this way will be passed unopened to the chair. The formal complaints process above will be followed and the deadlines met, where possible. However, as board members are volunteers and most have busy jobs, investigating and responding to a complaint may take slightly longer.

Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and any available facts looked into. Without detail it is often very difficult to effectively investigate anonymous complaints and we encourage anyone with any concerns about Caring Together to use the process set out in this policy.

We will be mindful that anonymous complaints can sometimes be malicious. Everyone involved in our work, even incidentally, has a right to complain and we will hold anyone accountable but, equally, individuals have a right to be protected from unsubstantiated and, potentially malicious allegations.

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