

# Complaint Procedure for Service Users

## 1. Introduction

We always aim to provide a high standard of care in all our services.

Our Service Users' views are important to us and help to ensure our services are consistently meeting people's needs. If you are unhappy with any of our services, it is important that you let us know.

If a complaint alerts us to possible abuse or neglect, we will tell the relevant Essex Safeguarding Board. The Safeguarding Board will decide how to investigate and monitor outcomes.

## 2. Making a Suggestion

Often people feel more comfortable suggesting improvements than complaining formally. Suggestions can be made by anyone receiving services, or their friends/family. To make a suggestion you can:

- Speak to the Manager or their Deputy
- Utilise available comments or suggestion boxes if you would rather make your suggestion that way
- If the suggestion is something that Carers Choices as a company needs to consider you can send it to:

Registered Manager

Carers Choices

The White House  
Kiln Road  
Benfleet  
Essex  
SS7 1BU

01268 881 130

## 3. Making a Complaint

We aim to handle complaints quickly, effectively and in a fair and honest way. We take all complaints seriously and use valuable information from investigating to help us improve the service we provide. We treat all complaints in confidence.

Carers Choices assures Service Users and their families that it will not withdraw or reduce services because someone makes a complaint in good faith.

## 4. Who Can Complain

Anyone affected by the way Carers Choices provides services can make a complaint.

A representative can make a complaint for the affected person if they:

- Have died
- Cannot make a complaint themselves, or
- Have given consent for the representative to act on their behalf

If you are not happy about making a complaint yourself and you do not know someone who can talk or write to us on your behalf, we will be happy to find someone from an independent organisation to act as an advocate for you.

## 5. How You Can Make a Complaint

You can complain:

- In person
- By telephone
- Through a member of our staff
- Through an advocate or representative

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*Where someone complains verbally we will make a written record and provide a copy of it within 3 working days*

- By letter
- By email

### 6. Anonymous Complaints

We deal with anonymous complaints under the same procedure. However, it should be noted, if you provide contact details, we can update you on the outcome of our investigation.

### 7. Responsibility

The Registered Manager has overall responsibility for dealing with all complaints made about their service.

We will provide as far as is reasonably practical:

- Any help you need to understand the complaints procedure
- Advice on where you may get that help
- Information about making a complaint in a way you can understand

### 8. How We Handle Complaints

The Registered Manager or Carers Choices may ask one of the management team to investigate the complaint. That person will have enough seniority and experience to deal with the issues raised by the complaint.

We will acknowledge a complaint within **3** working days and give you the name and contact details of the person investigating it.

We will keep you informed about the progress of the investigation. We aim to have all complaints finished within **28 working days** unless we agree a different time scale with you.

When we have finished investigating, we will arrange to meet with you to discuss the outcome, and write to you with:

- Details of the findings
- Any action we have taken
- Our proposals to resolve your complaint

### 9. Time Limits

You should complain as soon as you can after the date on which the event occurred or came to your notice. If you complain more than twelve months later, we may not be able to investigate properly. However, we will consider whether you had a good reason for not making the complaint sooner and whether, despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

### 10. Further Steps

At any stage during the process, if you are not happy with the way the service is dealing with your complaint you can contact the Chief Executive at:

Carers Choices  
The White House  
Kiln Road  
Benfleet  
Essex  
SS7 1BU  
01268 881 130

Once we have dealt with your complaint, if you are not happy with the outcome you can refer your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and ask for it to be reviewed. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman provides a free independent service.

You can contact them at:

## Complaint Final Response Letter Template

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

PO Box 4771,  
Coventry CV4 0EH,  
Tel: 0845 602 1983 or 024 7682 1960,  
Fax: 024 7682 0001,  
advice@lgo.org.uk

***NB: The Ombudsman will not normally investigate a complaint until the provider has had an opportunity to respond and resolve matters.***

Carers Choices services are registered with and regulated by the Care Quality Commission. The CQC cannot get involved in individual complaints about providers but is happy to receive information about services at any time.

You can contact the CQC at:

Care Quality Commission National Correspondence

Care Quality Commission (CQC)  
National Correspondence  
Citygate, Gallowgate  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4PA  
Tel: 03000 616161  
Fax: 03000 616171

Website: [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)