

Charity Complaints Policy

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Title	Charity Complaints Policy
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Author	Chief Executive Officer

Version	Amendments	Date
0.0	None	January 2018
1.1	3 year review- minor amendments	16 th September, 2021

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At Autism Unlimited we are committed to providing the highest quality service to people we support and to our stakeholders in an accountable way.
- 1.2 We welcome feedback and view complaints and compliments as an opportunity to learn and improve our practice. Anyone who wishes to comment on the charity's work or services is encouraged to do so by accessible buttons on our website or by telephone or email.

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The policy aims to ensure that complaints can be resolved quickly, fairly and effectively. It also defines that as a Charity we:

- make a complaint as easy as possible to make and to welcome the feedback;
- each feedback receives a prompt response and is treated confidentially.
- ensure that our process is transparent and timeframes are realistic;
- address complaints as close to the source as possible
- take every step possible to achieve a productive outcome and to resolve all complaints within a timely manner.

2.2 Why people might want to complain:

From time to time, we may not meet stakeholders' expectations. Expressions of dissatisfaction might include:

- not feeling treated with courtesy and respect;
- a service not delivered reliably or on time;

- not receiving a service that promotes physical, emotional, material or social wellbeing or safety;
- a service failing to meet the needs of People We Support;
- feeling discriminated against in any way.

Or any other issue that is inconsistent with the expectations of our standards. If at any time during the investigation of a complaint a matter arises which warrants investigation under disciplinary proceedings or criminal investigation, the procedure ([see Appendix A](#)) will be paused until those investigations are complete. Similarly, the complaints procedure will be suspended if a complainant is seeking legal redress.

Autism Unlimited may, at any stage of the complaints procedure, review a complaint and provide a decision, without a formal investigation, where it is deemed that the complaint is deliberately repetitive or vexatious.

Serious complaints will be declared to the Charity Commission in line with charity regulation and to the relevant regulatory bodies. If appropriate, the relevant Local Authority may also be advised.

This Feedback Policy is based on a five-step approach;

Complaints will be recorded centrally by the Feedback Coordinator. Once the issue has been resolved, the Feedback Coordinator will update the Log.

The Feedback Log will include:

- Details of the person making the complaint;
- Date and nature of the complaint;
- Actions taken, by whom and timescales;
- Outcome of the complaint and closure actions.

2.3 Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, it should be confirmed in writing to avoid misunderstanding.

2.4 Confidentiality and GDPR

When an individual interacts with the Charity some personal information is collected:

An individual has the right to ask for a copy of the information that is held about them and to have any inaccuracies in their personal details corrected. An individual can also request their records be removed from our database or to receive a copy of the information held about them. They can also ask us to stop using their data for a specific purpose.

We will aim to acknowledge receipt of all such requests within five working days and respond more fully within 28 working days. An individual can exercise any or all of these rights by emailing Feedback@autism-unlimited.org.

3.0

- Should the complaint not be resolved at conclusion, it may be escalated as follows:
 - Chief Executive Officer;
 - Chairman of the Board of Trustees;
 - CQC and/or Ofsted.

Website Form Link: <https://www.autism-unlimited.org/about/compliments-and-complaints/>.

Appendix A

COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Definitions

A **comment** is a volunteered personal opinion or belief, feedback or remark expressed by the customer or an idea for making changes or improvements to any part of the Charity's services or administration.

A **compliment** is a customer statement of positive recognition or praise for a service or member of staff.

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions undertaken by the Charity and its staff, which affects an individual or group of customers.

Procedures

Comments procedure

The feedback coordinator will thank the customer for taking the time to let us know we are providing a good service.

Compliments procedure

Compliments will be forwarded to the appropriate Service Lead, CEO and HR. Service Leads are encouraged to celebrate and share information of this nature at regular team meetings and acknowledge performance of said individual and or team. Where consent is sought and provided, compliments may be used in our marketing activity – e.g. published within marketing collateral, uploaded to website and/or used on social media.

Complaints procedure:

The Complainant should be encouraged in the first instance, to discuss concerns with the relevant person in the organisation in person.

Should they not feel comfortable with this or are not satisfied with this approach, then they should raise an official complaint and email their concerns to: Feedback@autism-unlimited.org

- 1) The feedback coordinator will monitor and log all complaints.
- 2) The feedback coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and assure the Complainant that their concerns are being taken seriously. The feedback coordinator will inform the Complainant that they can expect to hear from the Complaint Lead (named for that case) within the next 28 working days to inform them of their findings.

- 3) The Complaint Lead is determined to organise the investigation and consider the outcomes with the Investigator. They should maintain contact with the complainant and report back regularly to the feedback coordinator so that the log can be maintained with file notes of any verbal communication. The CEO should be updated on the progress of all complaints to state if the matter has been resolved. The Complaint Lead should maintain the detailed records in line with GDPR for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it is being processed.
- 4) The Complaint Lead to action the response to complainant within the agreed timeframe of 28 working days. The feedback coordinator will sent the reply to the complainant.

Should the complaint not be resolved in the above process it may be escalated as follows:

- Chief Executive Officer;
- Chairman of the Board of Trustees;
- CQC and/or Ofsted, or Fundraising Regulator.

Website

The charity website will detail this procedure clearly together with the email address to send feedback to. The feedback coordinator will manage the email address; in her absence, the mailbox will be manned by the CEO.

Learning from Complaints

The Charity values complaints and uses the information to inform and to develop services that support the needs of the customer. All respondents to complaints are required to complete a "Learning from Complaints Form".

The Learning from Complaints Form provides an opportunity for staff to review the complaint and identify any lessons learnt and any corrective action taken. A copy of the form must accompany a copy of the response sent to the feedback coordinator before the complaint can be deemed