Complaints procedure
Policy statement

About with Friends aims to provide high quality services which meet the needs of its members. In order to ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which you can let us know of for any reason you are not satisfied with your dealings with the organisation. All complaints will be treated in confidence.

This policy has been sets out how About with Friends complies with Regulation 16 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (regulated activities) Regulations 2014.

To meet this regulation providers must have an effective and accessible system for identifying, receiving, handling and responding to complaints from people using the service, people acting on their behalf or other stakeholders. All complaints must be investigated thoroughly and any necessary action taken where failures have been identified.

About with Friends will investigate all complaints and necessary and proportionate action will be applied.

Policy objectives

- Members, their representatives and carers are aware of how to complain, both verbally or in writing and that About with Friends provides easy-to-use opportunities to register their complaints
- All staff must know how to respond when they receive a complaint and those staff involved in the assessment and investigation of complaints are fully trained about the internal complaints process and are knowledgeable about current statutory guidance
- Complainants and those whom complaints are made are kept informed of the status of their complaint, its investigation and outcome
- Complainants will not be discriminated against or victimised
- Appropriate action is taken without delay to respond to any failures identified by a complaint or the investigation of a complaint by a complaint or the investigation of a complaint
- Information is available to a complainant about how to take action if they are not satisfied with About with Friends response
- About with Friends maintain a record of all complaints, outcomes and action taken and monitors complaints looking for trends and risks
- About with Friends Trustees to review the complaints record six monthly
- About with Friends will act in accordance with Regulation 20: Duty of Candour
- About with Friends Registered Manager will provide information about a complaint within 28 days of a CQC request.

Policy in operation

1. Named complaints Officers

1.1 The named Complaints Manager with responsibility for following through complaints is Martin Higgins, Registered Manager.

1.2 The complaints administrator is Lesley Osborne Senior Administrator.

About with Friends

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2. Verbal / informal complaints

2.1 All verbal complaints are taken seriously
2.2 The initial complaint or concern should be raised as soon as possible with the activity or service lead or the manager
2.3 If the complaint is about the activity or service lead please speak to the manager
2.4 If your complaint is about the manager please speak to the CEO
2.5 Often we will be able to give you a response straight away. When the matter is more complicated we will give you at least an initial response within five working days.
2.6 If you are not satisfied with the response or wish to raise a more formal response please write to us
2.7 If the complaint is being made on behalf of the member or by an advocate we may ask to speak to the member to ensure accuracy and that it is the wish of the member.
2.8 At all times staff should remain calm and respectful when dealing with a complaint
2.9 After talking through the issue, the staff member dealing with the complaint will suggest a course of action to resolve the complaint. If this course of action is acceptable, the member of staff will clarify the agreement with the complainant and agree a way in which the results of the complaint will be communicated i.e letter, email
2.10 The verbal complaint should be recorded on the 'complaints tracker'
2.11 If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant then the member of staff dealing with the complaint should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing and providing a copy of the 'Complaints Policy'

3. Written / formal complaints

3.1 When a complaint is received in writing it passed to the Complaints Manager. The Complaints Administrator will record it in the complaints log and send out an acknowledgement letter within two working days, the Complaints Policy will be included in the acknowledgement letter
3.2 If the complaint raises safeguarding matters the complaints process will cease immediately and Safeguarding procedures will be started.
3.3 Immediately on receipt of the complaint the charity will launch an investigation. The aim is to investigate your complaint properly and give you a reply within ten working days, setting out how the problem will be dealt with. If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered.
3.4 Once the investigation is complete a written account of the investigation will be sent to the complainant, including outcomes and any shortcomings. The report will also include details of what to do if the complainant is unhappy with the outcome
3.5 You may be asked to attend a meeting to which you can bring a friend, relative or representative. (You do not have to attend if you do not wish to and the report will be sent to you)

4 What can complainants do if unhappy with the outcome of the complaint

4.1 If after we have responded you are not satisfied, with the outcome of the complaint or how it was dealt with you can write to

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- Adults - Local Government Ombudsman for adult social care. It is a free service. The Ombudsman will investigate complaints in a fair and independent way. http://www.lgo.org.uk/
- CQC – CQC National Customer Service, CityGate,Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne,NE1 4PA **Email - enquiries@cqc.org.uk** **Contact Number:** 03000 616161
- NCC Complaints Contact: 0344 8008020

7 End of policy