



Complaints Handling Policy

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CONSULTATION AND RATIFICATION SCHEDULE

Name of Consultative Body	Date of Approval
Senior Management Team	25.03.2019

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

Primecare Health LTD is committed to ensuring its services are of the highest quality. We welcome feedback from all stakeholders so we can improve or recognise and learn from positive or outstanding experiences. A formal complaints handling procedure enables Primecare to respond clearly and properly to complaints and to know when and why people are not satisfied with services, so we can improve them.

Our complaints handling policy and procedure reflects Primecare's commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve customer (for the purposes of this policy, customer may include service user, family member, social worker and involved professionals) dissatisfaction as closely as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints so evidence-based decisions on the facts of the case can be made.

Good complaints handling includes providing joint responses to complaints whenever they relate to more than one service. This policy and procedure gives staff information and guidance on how and when to do this, ensuring our customers get a comprehensive response to their complaints whenever this is possible. Our complaints handling procedure will enable us to address a customer's dissatisfaction and help prevent the same problem from happening again.

For staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of the customers' views and experience, and can highlight problems we may otherwise miss. Handled well, complaints can give our customers a form of redress when things go wrong. This policy and procedure will help us do our job better, improve relationships with our customers and enhance public perception of Primecare Health LTD. It will help us keep service users at the heart of the process, while enabling us to better understand how to improve our services by learning from complaints.

The Director of Adult Services of Primecare Health LTD and the Senior Management Team (SMT) are responsible for the efficient operation of this complaints policy and procedure. Responsibility for carrying out investigations of complaints may be delegated to appropriate managers of Primecare Health, under the authority of the Directors and Senior Management Team.

All complaints will be recorded and stored securely.

This policy covers both external and internal complaints handling.

2. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is when someone tells us that they are not happy with our services. It is an expression of dissatisfaction, about our action, or lack of action or about the way the complainant has been treated or about the standard of service provided. The complaint can be raised in any form of communication verbal and non-verbal.

3. WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Anyone/group is entitled to make a complaint and this is not restricted to the customer i.e. service users or their relatives or representatives including Primecare's employees. It also applies to other stakeholders for example local authorities, other agencies and the general public.

Sometimes a service user may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint on their own. Primecare Health LTD will accept complaints from third parties, which may include relatives, friends and advocates. The third party should, where possible, obtain consent from the service user. In certain circumstances, the third party may raise a complaint without receiving consent, such as when there are concerns relating to an individual's wellbeing.

People have a right to raise the complaint directly to Care Inspectorate, this can be done at any time, for more information please access <https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/complaints> or call 0345 600 9527

Staff complaints are covered under the grievance policy and procedure.

4. MAKING A COMPLAINT

Stage one (Informal) Front line resolution

For all external complaints these should be directed to the appropriate Care Supervisors/Senior Autism Practitioner to investigate. Informal complaints should be resolved within 7 working days.

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally with Care Supervisors/Senior Autism Practitioner, the complaint should be escalated to Stage 2.

To support service users to make a complaint, please refer to the Support Plan – service agreement. For third parties making complaints, complaints should be submitted to keyworkers and Care Supervisor/Senior Autism Practitioner.

All employee complaints will go through Primecare's grievance procedures.

Stage two (Formally registering a complaint) – Investigation required

Complaints that cannot be resolved, should progress to Stage 2.

Complaints should be submitted to the Services Manager who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated.

Complaints will be acknowledged, by letter, within 7 working days and a full written response will be provided within 20 working days from receipt of the complaint.

The response provide by Primecare Health LTD should include:

- Details of the investigation
- A decision about whether the complaint was upheld or not.
- The reason for the decision.
- The redress, if appropriate, which will be offered to you e.g. an apology, additional help or signposting to other sources of advice or support.
- Any other action that may be taken in light of the complaint.
- If it is not possible to provide a full answer to your complaint within 20 working days, the letter will outline reasons why and give a date by which a full answer is expected.

Stage three (Appeals)

An Appeals Panel, normally of two members, will be convened to consider the appeal. The Directors and Senior Managers will be responsible for ensuring the panel is appropriately representative. Panel membership will be restricted to people who have had no previous involvement in the complaint.

Members of the Appeals Panel will:

- read through the necessary papers
- speak to relevant individuals involved with the complaint
- make a final decision

The Chair of the Appeals Panel will provide an outcome, in writing, within 28 working days of receiving your appeal, which will include:

- the final decision about the complaint
- the reason for the decision
- if appropriate, the redress which will be offered to you e.g. an apology, additional help or directing to other sources of advice or support
- any action that may be taken in light of the complaint.

In circumstances where time limits cannot be met due to unforeseen circumstances, complainants will be notified in writing. The reasons for the delay with adjusted timescales will be supplied by the person responsible for handling the complaints.

If a complaint is about the Director of Adult Services then it should be sent to the Company Director, and addressed to Company Director, 11 Castle Road Winchburgh EH52 6RQ

5. POLICY REVIEW STATEMENT

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legislatively or operationally required.