



Policies and Procedures

Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy - Scotland

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Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy - Scotland

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Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy - Scotland

Who does this policy apply to?

The Community Integrated Care Group of companies in Scotland, hereafter referred to as “the Group” **excluding** Age Exchange and ARC HD Services.

- 1.1. **People we support:** this includes people currently using our services, those who have in the past, and anyone whose contact with the Group is concerned with their wellbeing or having been a consumer or potential consumer of services.
- 1.2. **People directly associated with those we support** in a personal capacity — their relatives, friends, visitors and representatives.
- 1.3. **Colleagues:** including temporary colleagues, volunteers and office-based workers where appropriate of the Group.
- 1.4. **Third Parties:** including suppliers, contractors, purchasers, and other organisations considered ‘external’ to the Group.

Policy Statement

Community Integrated Care’s ethos is one of openness, honesty and integrity and it is within this spirit that we encourage and embrace all complaints, compliments and comments.

To us, your complaints, compliments and comments really matter.

This policy supports the “Health and Social Care Standards; My Support, my life (HSCS).” We promote a culture where complaints, compliments and comments are welcomed, and we value each one as an opportunity to learn, develop and change. That’s why we will always thank you for voicing your feedback and for giving us the chance to improve the service we deliver. Your comments and compliments allow us to share and embed good practice. HSCS Standard 4.19, “I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.”

At the heart of our approach is a genuine desire to *understand what our customers have experienced*. Only by seeing things through your eyes can we truly understand your complaint, and work to put things right in way that is best for *you*. We believe in making our approach personal to you and your specific comments or complaints.

We seek to remove any barriers to making a complaint, submitting a comment or compliment. Compassion is key: we promise that you will be listened to, heard and understood and that your relationship with us will not be compromised by telling us what you think. HSCS Standard 4.21, “If I have a concern or complaint, this will be discussed with me and acted on without negative consequences for me.”

What are complaints, compliments or comments?

We have a really wide definition of both comments and complaints - so that there is always a procedure through which all customers can give us their feedback - and through which we can guarantee that your comments or complaints will be dealt with efficiently and effectively.

We view **complaints** as any genuine expression of dissatisfaction about our charity and the services we provide which requires further investigation.

Comments are any remarks, observations or suggestions that may require action.

Compliments may arise in recognition of a colleague's efforts go above and beyond your expectations or perhaps when events we organised have been truly special. There is no limit on what you can highlight to us as we can learn just as much from these.

Who can make a comment or complaint?

Ultimately, we believe that any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in our charity has the right to tell us how they feel in instances where we are not meeting the standards they expect of us (and indeed that we expect of ourselves).

Generally though, comments or complaints will come from any of our customers – who we define for the purposes of this Policy as: the people we support, their friends, relatives or advocates; partners or agencies we work with; or members of the communities in which we work.

Roles and Responsibilities

Job Role/Group	Job Title	Responsibility
All Colleagues	All Colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to this procedure and to ensure that complainants are treated courteously and with respect and in accordance with stated timescales. Where appropriate, colleagues should assist complainants to raise a complaint. All colleagues should seek to offer immediate resolution to a complaint wherever possible, and to the satisfaction of the complainant. Where this is not possible colleagues should direct complainants to the formal complaint procedure.
Line Managers	Service Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure comments, compliments and complaints are dealt with in line with this procedure within their service
	Regional Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure complaints, comments and compliments are dealt with in accordance with procedure within all the services they are responsible for
Senior Managers	Head of Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that complaints, compliments and comments are dealt with in their region, in accordance with the procedure.
	Assistant Managing Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure swift identification of Investigating Officers and provide final approval of all complaint response letters (or delegate to Head of Operations in their absence).
	Managing Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that analysis of complaints, compliments and comments is undertaken, with learning noted and improvement actions considered and reported upon.

Quality Team	Complaints, Data and Policies Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in day-to-day administration of the procedure and management of complaints.
	Complaints Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day to day responsibility for administration and management of incoming and progressing complaints in accordance with this procedure.
	Chief Quality and Risk Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that analysis of comments, complaints and compliments is undertaken and communicated.
Quality and Standards Control Group	Quality and Standards Control Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review trends and to use the knowledge gained to improve services.
CEO	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ultimate responsibility for the standard of care and support within the charity lies with the Chief Executive.

Key Knowledge

Policy

- Every person we support has a right to have their voice heard, whether they want to complain about the support they receive, offer a compliment or provide a comment. Family members and loved ones may make a complaint, or with their consent, submit a complaint, compliment or comment on behalf of the person supported. Family members with Guardianship can submit complaints on behalf of their loved one. HSCS Standard 4.20, "I know how, and can be helped, to make a complaint or raise a concern about my care and support. "
- We encourage family members, loved ones and colleagues to advocate with a person supported to ensure their voice is heard if that person has consented to this partnership. We also recognise that the person supported may not always have capacity to raise a complaint themselves and is reliant on a loved one to do this for them and we also welcome complaints made in these circumstances.
- We also welcome complaints and feedback from other professionals or people living in the community about our services.
- We encourage and embrace all complaints and comments and see them as an opportunity to learn and develop whilst compliments and suggestions allow us to share and embed good practice.
- All colleagues will be open, non-defensive, transparent and timely in their handling of any feedback received.
- People making complaints or comments will be treated with respect and sensitivity.
- People have the right to complain anonymously if they wish but this means they will not have opportunity to participate in any investigation or receive a response detailing outcome.
- Any complaints detailing concerns of an Adult Support and Protection nature will be immediately progressed in accordance with our Adult Support and Protection Procedure as a priority.

Procedure

- Complaints can be made in any way suitable to the person making the complaint.
- All complaints must be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt.
- How the complaint is dealt with, by who, and in what timescales, are to be agreed with the complainant on an individual basis.
- The Investigating Officer must be a person impartial to the complaint.
- Complaints must be dealt with quickly and efficiently; resolved at the earliest opportunity and in a time period which is relevant to the particular complaint.
- For more serious complaints, consideration should be given to the investigation being conducted by a person based in a different region to that in which the complaint is made.
- Outcome responses and any actions taken will be communicated at the earliest opportunity and by the method the complainant chooses.

Advocacy

Some of the people we support may need help from an advocate to submit a complaint. Advocacy may be defined as any action that speaks in favour of, recommends, or pleads on behalf of others. People may need support to have their voices heard or their best interests considered and this is when they may need someone to advocate with them. An advocate is someone who will be 'in your corner' helping to make sure rights are upheld. HSCS Standard 2.4, "I am supported to use independent advocacy if I want or need this."

There are several types of advocacy; independent advocates work for independent organisations, mainly charities and availability can vary across our regions.

Any connected individual can advocate for a person we support to promote their best interests where that person has given their consent to the advocacy ‘partnership’. As well as an Independent Advocate, this could be a family member, friend or a Community Integrated Care colleague.

People can advocate for themselves to challenge decisions and proposed actions by raising issues directly with the manager of their service or by contacting the Complaints Manager at Quality@c-i-c.co.uk.

Peer advocacy is where a person with similar lived experience can provide advocacy support to others.

Value	How it applies to this policy
Respect	We encourage the views and input of people we support and others to improve the way we resolve complaints.
Enable	We deal with problems with a “can-do” attitude, working to resolve conflicts in a positive way for all.
Aspire	We aim to deliver the best customer experience possible. How we handle customer feedback is a significant part of achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty.
Deliver	By learning and reflecting on our customers’ feedback we can deliver the best possible services for the people we support and the partners we work with. HSCS Standard 4.4, “I receive an apology if things go wrong with my care and support or my human rights are not respected, and the organisation takes responsibility for its actions”.
Include	Everyone with an interest in our organisation has the opportunity to give us their feedback if we aren’t meeting the standards they expect of us.

Key Principles

With this vision in mind and our organisational values, our Comments & Complaints Procedure centres on these key principles: -

- We will provide a **fair and transparent** procedure that is **simple, easy to understand** and **straight-forward to use**.
- **Our procedure will never be one-size-fits-all**. It will be flexible to the person making the complaint and the type of complaint they have.
- We will **publicise** our complaints policy, so that our customers know that they can make a complaint and how to do so.
- Our colleagues will understand the **importance of customer satisfaction and loyalty** and how proper handling of complaints helps support these.
- Our approach to dealing with complaints will be **communicated clearly to all colleagues**. All colleagues will understand how to support a person to make a complaint and know what to do if they receive one.
- Every person making a complaint will be treated with **respect, fairness and sensitivity**. Complaints will be able to be expressed freely and without prejudice.
- Every person making a **complaint will have the right to remain anonymous** if they wish but this will mean they are unable to participate in any complaint investigation and therefore receive a response.
- All complaint information will be kept **confidential and handled sensitively**, telling only those who need to know.¹
- **People will feel assured** that raising a complaint will never negatively affect the service they receive from us or the relationship we have with them.
- We will ensure that complaints are investigated **fairly and in timely way**. We will keep people regularly updated on the progress of their complaint, proposed actions and timeframes.
- We will make every attempt to resolve complaints or problems at the **earliest possible stage** and that where possible, relationships are repaired. HSCS Standard 4.4, "I receive an apology if things go wrong with my care and support or my human rights are not respected, and the organisation takes responsibility for its actions."
- Our approach to complaint investigation will be thorough, inclusive, balanced and impartial.
- We will **monitor all complaints** to ensure we identify key trend; address areas for improvement and monitor quality and consistency.

¹ And for any data protection requirements

- We will always **thank our customers** for taking the time to share their complaints, compliments and comments with us and will always let them know when they have helped us address a problem and that we will use this to help us be a learning organisation.

It is the responsibility of all colleagues to adhere to this Policy and to ensure that complainants are treated courteously and with respect and in accordance with stated timescales. Any contravention of our principles by any colleague will become a disciplinary matter.

Other important information

This Policy is underpinned by the charity's Equality and Diversity Policy. People we support, relatives, colleagues and all other stakeholders must be treated equally irrespective of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and disability.

All managers and colleagues will be informed of any complaints against them at the appropriate stage and informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Our Policy and Procedures meet the requirements laid out by both the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and is informed by the HSCS.

Where a complaint involves an allegation which could have an impact on safeguarding people we support, the appropriate Adult Support and Protection procedures must be followed. HSCS Standard 3.22, "I am listened to and taken seriously if I have a concern about the protection and safety of myself or others, with appropriate assessments and referrals made."

Where a complaint involves a notifiable safety incident relating to care and treatment, the appropriate Duty of Candour policy and procedure must be followed.

Appendix 1: Contact Details

A complaint may be made to the **Local Authority** contracts unit or funding body paying for the service, details can be provided by the manager of the service.

The complainant has the right to complain directly to **Care Inspectorate** for the complaint to be investigated or to the **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman** if they are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation.

Community Integrated Care

Quality Department
Old Market Court
2 Miners Way
Widnes
WA8 7SP

Telephone: 0151 420 3637

Email: quality@c-i-c.co.uk

www.c-i-c.co.uk

Local Authority

You can find the contact details of your local council by visiting the website at www.gov.uk

There may be some circumstances when a person can take their complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. This body has a limited role and will only be able to deal with a complaint about a public service, i.e. the NHS, local authorities, housing associations and only when the internal complaints procedure has been fully exhausted. The ombudsman's office can investigate complaints about administrative failures, failure to provide a service and a failure in a service in these failures cause hardship or injustice to a person. Community Integrated Care is not a public service but, for example, the local social work department and the care inspectorate are public services. A person might complaint about Community Integrated Care's services to the local social work department or the Care Inspectorate. If a complainant feels that they did not deal with their complaint properly, then they can complain about this to the ombudsman.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Freepost SPSO

Telephone: 0800 377 7330

www.spsso.org.uk

Care Inspectorate

Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Telephone: 0345 600 9527

Email: concerns@careinspectorate.gov.scot

www.careinspectorate.com

Scottish Fundraising Standards Panel

To be completed online at: <https://www.goodfundraising.scot/make-a-complaint/>

Telephone: 0808 164 2520

Institute of Fundraising Scotland

Hayweight House, Floor 4
23 Lauriston Street
Edinburgh
EH3 9DQ

Telephones: 0738 741 7581

scotland@institute-of-fundraising.org.uk

Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland

91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HE

Telephone: 0131 313 8777

People we support and carers Freephone: 0800 389 6809

Email: enquiries@mwscot.org.uk

<http://www.mwscot.org.uk>

Appendix 2: Legislation and Regulation

Legislation and helpful guides

Principals of Good Complaint Handling - Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

A guide to better customer care – Department of Health

SSI 2011/210 Social Care

Regulation - Scotland

Health and Social Care Standards: My support, my life.

- 1: I experience high quality care and support that is right for me
- 2: I am fully involved in all decisions in all decisions about my care and support
- 3: I have confidence in the people who support and care for me
- 4: I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support
- 5: I experience a high-quality environment if the organisation provides the premises

Health and Social Care Principles:

Responsive care and support

- If I make a complaint it is acted on.

Reference: [Health and Social Care Standards: my support, my life - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Linked Policies and Procedures

Comments, Complaints and Compliments procedure Scotland.....	QD1.1S
Complaints Procedure Easy Read	QD1a
Adult Support and Protection policy	QD7
Child Protection in Scotland policy	QD9
Duty of Candour Scotland	QD16.1
Speak Out.....	QD1.3
Equality and Diversity policy	HR2

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to assess the impact of a change to services or policy on people with protected characteristics, which includes Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy & maternity, Race (Including ethnic origin, colour or nationality), Religion or belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix 4: Document Information Sheet

Policy or Procedure Title*	Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy - Scotland
Reference Number*	QD1SB
Version* and Active Date*	Version:16– Date: 29/04/2026
Document Author	Nicola Catterall
Document Lead*	Eleanor Cropper
Document Approver	Quality and Standards Control Group
Department*	Quality and Risk
Date of Last Review	29/04/2026
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Related Policy/Procedure	QD1a, QD1.1S, QD7, QD9, QD16.1, QD1.3, HR2
Keywords	Complaints, complaint, comments, compliments, concern, speak out, whistleblow, whistleblowing, duty of candour, grievance
Template Version	18

Applicability Matrix

Please delete ✓ where document does not apply

Service Type

Registered LD Service	✓	Supported Living	✓	Residential Care Home	✓	Residential Nursing Home	✓
Respite Care	✓			Extra Care	✓	Day Care	✓
Support at Home	✓	Support in the Community	✓	Support Services (Head Office)	✓		

Client Group

Learning Disabilities	✓	Mental Health	✓	Older People	✓	Autism	✓
Dementia	✓	Sensory Impairment	✓	Physical Disabilities	✓	Acquired Brain Injury	✓
Children	✓	Adults	✓	England		Scotland	✓