



POLICY

4.1 Complaints

- ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED understands complaints to be an expression of dissatisfaction requiring a response; communicated verbally, electronically, or in writing. Complaints may be made by any Service Users, their family members, or advocates acting on their behalf with their consent or in their best interests
- ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED takes complaints seriously. We will aim to put things right that have gone wrong and learn lessons to avoid the problem happening again. This policy sets out the framework for how ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will achieve this. The detail of how ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will do this will be found in the associated procedures
- ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will comply with legislation, national guidelines, regulation and best practice when managing complaints and suggestions. A systematic approach will be taken with all aspects of complaints and suggestions
- Complaints or concerns by staff will be addressed via the grievance process if the complaint or concerns relates to them individually, or via the Whistleblowing process where a protected disclosure is made
- ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED understands its statutory obligations in respect of the Duty of Candour and will ensure it follows the agreed policy and procedure

4.2 ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will ensure that the complaints, suggestions and compliments process at ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED is fair and transparent and does not discriminate directly or indirectly because of the following:

- Age
- Being or becoming a transsexual/transgender person
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave
- Disability
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The complainant will feel free to complain without fear of reprisals and will be treated with courtesy, respect and compassion. ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will ensure that the process of how to make a complaint and the feedback is provided in a way that meets the Accessible Information Standards and is in a format that the Service User can understand.

4.3 Seeking Views and Engaging with Service Users

ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will seek out opportunities to obtain feedback from Service Users and stakeholders. ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will act with sensitivity, integrity and professionalism by treating individuals who do complain or raise a suggestion with compassion, courtesy and respect. The service will protect the Service User's right to confidentiality. ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will ensure that alternative methods of communication are available so that the complaints and suggestions procedures are accessible for Service Users who experience difficulties with communication or whose first language is not English.

Staff will undertake training on how to manage complaints in line with their role and responsibilities.

4.4 ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED understands that it can be difficult to separate a complaint from a



concern, therefore, ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will follow this policy when any dissatisfaction arises with the service.

4.5 A full record will be held of all complaints received regardless of the level of seriousness and means of communication. This approach allows an open and transparent culture around raising concerns in the earliest stage to allow resolution. A record of the complaint will also be held in the Service User's Care file and reported in line with contractual or regulatory requirements.

4.6 Safeguarding Concerns

Where a complaint or concern is raised that relates to a Service User being harmed or is likely to be harmed, ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will follow its safeguarding policies in addition to the complaints procedures, seeking advice and guidance from the Safeguarding Adults Team of Hertfordshire and escalating concerns in line with the procedure of Hertfordshire. ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will also notify CQC in line with our statutory duty.

4.7 Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff

It is acknowledged that all staff working within ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED may be presented with an individual wishing to raise a concern or complaint at any time; therefore, staff need to be able to manage this in a sensitive, structured and timely manner. In order to do this, staff will:

- Be trained on induction and as a routine measure to ensure knowledge is embedded and refreshed around the complaints procedure
- Have access to the Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Policy and Procedure
- Be provided with the opportunity to reflect and learn from complaints as a means of developing and driving quality care
- Appreciate that any feedback from Service Users or their representatives that is of concern needs immediate resolution, where possible, to their satisfaction. Care Plans will be updated to reflect the planned changes to care and the Registered Manager informed of the feedback. Failing to do this may result in a complaint
- Be clearly advised that on presentation of a complaint, swift escalation to management is necessary and purposefully withholding or concealing of concerns expressed by Service Users or their representatives may lead to disciplinary action

Management Team at ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED

- The management team at ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy, regulations, improvement planning and having arrangements in place to provide relevant reports and information regarding complaints
- Belinda Berry is the main point of contact for the receipt, investigation and management of complaints within ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED. However, this may be delegated to a senior member of staff within ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED who holds the experience, knowledge and competence to investigate and manage complaints
- ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will ensure the procedure for raising a complaint is accessible and displayed prominently in ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED premises, on the website of ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED and within the Service User information and guides. Alternative languages and formats will be available on request

4.8 Compliments and Suggestions

ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED welcomes compliments and suggestions and recognises their importance in celebrating and recognising the success of our service and opportunities for improvement. We will engage with a wide range of stakeholders in addition to Service Users to support service development and improvement. We will share feedback with our staff.

4.9 One Complaint, One Response

ABACUS CARE & SUPPORT LIMITED will follow the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman best practice](#) and where Service Users are receiving services for more than one organisation, we will ensure the y can make a complaint to anyone and be provided with a single response following a joint investigation.



DEFINITIONS

6.1 Compliment

- A compliment is an expression of satisfaction about a service the Service User has received
- Compliments are positive feedback that can be received verbally or in writing and can include expressions of praise, admiration, congratulation and encouragement

6.2 Complaint

- A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, disappointment or discontent. This could be in response to an act of omission, a decision or an act
- Complaints can be made in various ways and include:
 - Verbally
 - Electronically
 - Local feedback channels
 - Writing

6.3 Self-Funded Care

- Self-funded care is defined as care that is paid for entirely by the person receiving it

6.4 Vexatious Complaint

- A vexatious complaint is one that is pursued, regardless of its merits, solely to harass, annoy or subdue somebody; something that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome or unwarranted