



Complaints Policy

This policy is for use by complainants from outside Carers Federation and by service users. This Policy covers general complaints, complaints specifically relating to Data Protection complaints (Appendix A) and Whistleblowing (Appendix B)

How to make a complaint

Carers Federation is strongly committed to investigating complaints promptly and thoroughly, and to learning from them, as part of our commitment to improving our processes and providing high quality services.

Carers Federation defines a complaint as: a clear expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the Federation or its staff affecting an individual or group.

This information is designed to help you make your complaint. If you require assistance in making a complaint, a member of staff will help you formulate and express your complaint.

Commitment

Carers Federation wishes to settle complaints quickly and informally at your first point of contact. We can normally sort out mistakes and misunderstandings quickly and the people who can best do this are those who provide the service.

If your complaint cannot be resolved in this way, these procedures are here to assist you. Your complaint should be made in writing (via email or letter).

Carers Federation is committed to dealing with all complaints in an efficient and understanding way. To do this we will:

- take all complaints seriously;
- deal with complaints as quickly as possible;
- send an acknowledgement letter to you within five working days if we cannot deal with your complaint immediately;

- aim to send you a final written answer within 10 working days of receiving your complaint;
- keep you regularly informed if we cannot answer you in 10 working days;
- make sure you get a letter explaining the result of your complaint;
- treat you with respect;
- make sure we treat your complaint in confidence;
- Look at the pattern of complaints and try to improve areas with continuing problems.

For all complaints, the following three-stage procedure is used. Complaints may be resolved at any of the three stages. You may decide to take a complaint to the next stage if you remain dissatisfied.

Stage 1

Wherever possible we will try to deal with your complaint at the service point involved. At this stage you should speak to the person with whom you have been dealing with when accessing our service, the aim will be to sort out simple mistakes or misunderstandings straightaway. Always keep a record of the details of your complaint, who you spoke to and their response to you. The person investigating will aim to:

- (i) resolve the complaint, or
- (ii) recommend action to whoever is in the best position to resolve the complaint.

Stage 2

If you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been dealt with at stage 1 you should contact the Manager of the service, you wish to complain about. The Service Manager will:

- acknowledge that your complaint has been received;
- begin their independent investigation;
- aim to write a reply to you within 10 days detailing the outcome.

If more time is required to investigate, the Manager will write to you giving a time limit for the response.

Stage 3

If you are still unhappy you can write to the Senior Management Team of Carers Federation, your complaint will be looked at independently and thoroughly investigated. The Senior Manager will only investigate your complaint if it has

already been investigated under stages 1 and 2 of the complaint's procedure. Decisions made at stage 3 are final and cannot be appealed.

All complaints submitted in writing should be addressed to the manager (as above) at the following address: *Christopher Cargill House, 21-23 Pelham Road, Nottingham NG5 1AP.*

Appendix A

Data Protection Complaints

A data protection complaint is a concern that Carers Federation has not handled personal information in line with data protection legislation. This may include concerns about how personal information has been collected, used, stored, shared, kept, secured, corrected or deleted.

A complaint may also relate to how Carers Federation has responded to a subject access request (SAR), another individual rights request, or a personal data breach affecting the complainant.

A person does not need to use legal wording or refer to data protection law for their concern to be treated as a data protection complaint.

Carers Federation will provide a clear and accessible way for individuals to raise data protection complaints directly, including through existing complaint routes (general complaints procedure) and any other appropriate contact route made available to service users, complainants or other individuals.

Data protection complaints may be made in writing, by email, by telephone, in person, or through any other route by which the concern is raised with Carers Federation. Where a complaint is received outside the usual complaints route, staff must ensure it is passed promptly to the appropriate manager.

Carers Federation will acknowledge receipt of a data protection complaint within 30 calendar days of receiving it. Where the matter can be investigated and resolved within that period, the acknowledgement and outcome may be provided together.

Before investigating, Carers Federation may need to confirm the complainant's identity or authority to act on behalf of another person. Only information necessary to progress the complaint will be requested.

Carers Federation will take appropriate steps to investigate and respond to data protection complaints without undue delay. This may include reviewing relevant records, speaking with staff involved, considering whether any error has occurred, and identifying any corrective action needed. The complainant will be kept informed where the matter cannot be concluded promptly.

At the end of the investigation, Carers Federation will provide the complainant with an outcome without undue delay. The response will explain the complaint considered, the steps taken to review it, the conclusion reached, and any action Carers Federation has taken or will take as a result.

If the complaint is partly about a service issue and partly about personal information, Carers Federation will consider the data protection element under this section and the service element under the wider complaints' procedure. If it is unclear whether a concern is a data protection complaint, clarification will be sought.

Complainants may also raise data protection concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Carers Federation will normally aim to resolve concerns directly and fairly wherever possible, but individuals are not prevented from contacting the ICO.

Carers Federation will keep an appropriate record of data protection complaints, including the date received, the nature of the complaint, actions taken, the outcome, any learning identified, and any follow-up action required. Complaint records will be handled confidentially and retained in line with Carers Federation's data protection and retention requirements.

Appendix B

Whistleblowing

Carers Federation has a policy and procedures for whistleblowing which can be used by the public.

You should use this policy if you have a genuine concern relating to a member of Carers Federation staff or volunteer and that there are reasonable grounds for believing that:

- a) A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed; or
- b) A person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with their legal obligations; or

- c) A miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur;
or
- d) The health and safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be endangered; or
- e) The environment has been, is being, or is likely to be damaged; or
- f) Any of the above are being, or are likely to be, deliberately concealed.

A copy of the full Whistleblowing policy is available from the Central Support Services Department (CSS) at the above address but we encourage you to contact them immediately on 0115 9629363 if your concerns fall within any of the above categories.

Printed copies are UNCONTROLLED. It is the user's responsibility to verify printed material against the current document.