

Title of Policy:	Complaints
Section:	Operations

Purpose

Complaints are an opportunity to improve the quality and efficiency of the services that Westdale provides to its Residents. This policy encourages Residents to voice their concerns so that difficulties can be speedily resolved to the satisfaction of all.

Statement

Westdale strives to achieve the very best outcomes for its Residents all the time. However, on occasion, things can go wrong, and as such, may be the subject of a complaint. If they do, we need to know about it so we can put it right, learn from our mistakes, and implement organisational, procedural or operational changes so as to reduce the potential for complaints in the future. It is the Westdale's commitment to:

- always take complaints seriously and investigate them fairly.
- deal with complaints according to this procedure, unless they are relatively minor.
- treat complaints confidentially.
- never discriminate against a Resident for making a complaint.
- ensuring that Residents know of the existence of this policy, and how to make a complaint if they wish to do so.

Complaints may be made directly by Residents, or they may be made on behalf of a Resident if the Resident is unable or unwilling to undertake the process alone.

Procedure and Guidance

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with regards to:

- The standard of service provided.
- The standard of the facilities, environment, or home in general.
- Action or lack of action taken.
- Decision taken.

Complaints may be made orally or in writing (letter or email). When the complaint is made orally, Westdale's understanding of the problem will, where necessary (in that the complaint has not or cannot be resolved informally) be summarised in the letter of acknowledgement.

Our approach

Informal Complaints

All staff are instructed to take complaints seriously. Where complaints are made orally, then staff are asked to try to resolve the problem immediately, and informally. The more formal procedure outlined here will usually not be instigated where the subject of the complaint is relatively minor. In such cases the recipient of the complaint will apologise unreservedly and express the wish that such events will not be repeated. In every case the Resident will be asked to confirm that they are happy with the response given.

If not, then the matter must be treated as though it was a written complaint. On occasion a Resident may make a complaint orally and directly to a Carer, for example, or to the office, on a more serious issue which cannot be dealt with informally. In such cases the individual receiving the Complaint will record the details of the complaint and advise senior staff or management without delay. The essence of the complaint will be summarised in the subsequent letter of acknowledgement.

Formal Complaints

All written complaints, or complaints made orally which have not been satisfied or are of a more serious nature, will be regarded as formal complaints and recorded in the Westdale's register of complaints.

All formal complaints will be handled by, or under the supervision of the Registered Manager, unless the complaint is about the Registered Manager, in which case it will be handled by the Director and Management Committee (organised or overseen by the Chair of the Committee).

At times where the senior Manager/Director cannot resolve the issue then the complaint may be referred to the Committee for support.

Acknowledgement

The complaint will be acknowledged, in writing, within 7 days of receipt. The acknowledgement will outline the essence of the complaint unless this has already been stated in writing by the Resident or their representative. The Westdale will outline the process to be undertaken, the likely duration of any investigation or consideration, and the name of the person who oversees the matter. On occasion, and in response to more serious matters, a longer initial timeframe may be proposed. If subsequent events indicate a likely delay, then the complainant will be kept informed, given the reason for the delay and where possible, given an updated timeframe.

Written response.

Written responses will outline the nature of the complaint, the matters given consideration, and its response. Once this has been sent, the person handling the complaint will follow up directly with the Resident, within 7 days, as to whether they feel that the matter has been dealt with appropriately, and to their satisfaction. Where this is confirmed, the person handling the complaint will write to the Complainant outlining what has been discussed and agreed. If the Resident remains dissatisfied, however, then further considerations may be given to help resolve any differences. However should Westdale's ability to resolve the matter prove insufficient, then the Resident will be advised that they may seek external advice, such as an approach to the Care Quality Commission, for example.

Records

Westdale will maintain records of all complaints, and details in relation to their outcome.

Learning from our mistakes

Every complaint is an opportunity to improve. Westdale will ensure that errors, mistakes or other omissions or failures are examined carefully so as to understand what needs to be done to prevent the same or similar incidents in the future.

Complaints about staff

Where a complaint is about the behaviour of a member of staff, and behaviour is found to be inappropriate, unprofessional or abusive (for example), then Westdale's formal disciplinary procedure will be introduced. Where appropriate, matters may also be referred to external bodies, such as the Disclosure and Barring Service, in cases of serious misconduct.

KLOE Reference for this Policy	Regulation(s) directly linked to this Policy	Regulation(s) relevant to this Policy
Responsive	Regulation 16: Receiving and acting on complaints	Regulation 12: Safe care and treatment Regulation 17: Good governance Regulation 20: Duty of candour

Appendix

Summary of procedure

Informal complaint – staff attempt to resolve informally.

If unable to resolve complaint is treated as a formal complaint.

Formal complaints are acknowledged in writing.

Issues are investigated and positive outcomes are sought for all parties.

Response is provided in writing.

Response is followed up with the Resident.

Further consideration is given.

Lessons for improvements and changes should be made.

Resident should be advised of external methods of complaint.