



Complaints and Feedback Policy

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Amendment History

Version	Date	Comments / Changes
1.1	25 th October 2022	Policy Created

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This document outlines the policy of The Bespoke Life (the “Company”) in relation to complaints and feedback. The policy is intended to:

- Ensure the Company has an effective system in place to manage complaints, suggestions, and compliments.
- Ensure that the Company complies with any legal requirements, regulations, guidelines, and best practice.
- Ensure that our complaints and compliments process is fair and transparent and does not discriminate directly or indirectly because of;
 - 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

With the complainant feeling free to complain without fear of reprisals and are treated with courtesy, respect, and compassion.

Objectives

- To improve the quality of our clients’ experience.
- To ensure that all complaints and suggestions are promptly addressed, resolved, and shared within the agreed timescales to ensure lessons are learnt and the learning improves service quality and delivery.
- To ensure staff at all levels within the Company understand their roles and responsibilities about handling complaints, suggestions and compliments.

Policy

Complaints

- The Company understands complaints to be an expression of dissatisfaction requiring a response, communicated verbally, electronically, or in writing. Complaints may be made by any Clients of the service, their family or advocate acting on their behalf, with their consent or in their best interests
- The Company takes complaints seriously. They 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 the service will achieve this. The detail of how the service will do this will be found in the associated procedures

- The Company 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 Whistleblowing procedure where a protected disclosure is made
- The Company understands their statutory obligations in respect of the Duty of Candour and will ensure they follow agreed policy and procedure

Seeking Views and Engaging with Clients

- The Company will seek out opportunities to obtain feedback from Clients and stakeholders. The Company will act with sensitivity, integrity, and professionalism by treating individuals that do complain or raise a suggestion with compassion, courtesy and respect. The service will protect Client's right to confidentiality. The service will ensure that alternative methods of communication are available so that the complaints and suggestions procedures are accessible for Clients 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.
- The organisation understands that it can be difficult to separate a complaint from a concern, therefore, the Company will follow this policy when any dissatisfaction arises with the service.
- 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 Clients file and reported in line with contractual or regulatory requirements.

Safeguarding Concerns

Where a complaint or concern is raised that relates to a client being harmed or likely to be harmed, the organisation will follow their Safeguarding Policy and Procedures in addition to the complaints procedures, seeking advice and guidance from the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults team.

Roles and Responsibilities All Staff

It is acknowledged that all staff working within the Company could 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. To do this staff should:

- Be trained on induction and as a routine measure to ensure knowledge is embedded and refreshed around the complaint procedure.
- Have access to the complaint procedure.
- Be provided with the opportunity to reflect and learn from complaints to developing and driving quality support.
- Appreciate that any feedback from Clients or their representatives that is of concern needs immediate resolution, where possible, to their satisfaction. Support Plans will be updated to reflect the planned changes to support, and the Managing Partner(s) informed of the feedback. Failing to do this could 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 Clients or their representatives could lead to disciplinary action

The Company Management Team

- The Companies management team is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy, regulations, improvement planning and having arrangements in place to provide relevant reports and information regarding complaints
- Vicky Weaver and Daisy Mahoney are the main points of contact for receipt, investigation and management of complaints within the Company, however, this could be delegated to a senior member of staff within the Company who holds experience, knowledge and competence to investigate and manage complaints.
- The Company will ensure the procedure for raising a complaint is accessible and displayed prominently in The Agency, on the Companies website and within the Client information and guides. Alternative languages and formats should be available on request

Compliments and Suggestions

The Company welcomes compliments and suggestions and recognise 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 Clients to support service development and improvement. We will share feedback with our staff.

One Complaint, One Response

The Company will follow the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman best practice and where Clients are receiving services for more than one organisation, we will ensure they can make a complaint to anyone and be provided with a single response following a joint investigation.

Procedures

Raising Complaints

A complaint can be received by the Company either verbally or in writing and can be made by:

- Clients
- Someone acting on behalf of a client and with their written consent, e.g., an advocate, relative, Member of Parliament
- Someone acting on behalf of a client who is unable to represent his or her own interests, provided this does not conflict with the Client's right to confidentiality or a previously expressed wish of the Client.

The Company should ensure that Clients are given information on how to make a complaint and the process once a complaint has been made, including any agreed timescales.

Time Limits for Submitting a Complaint

Complaints should be submitted within 12 months of the incident or concern arising. The time limit, however, can and should be waived, if:

- It is still practical and possible to investigate the complaint (the records still exist, and the individuals concerned are still available to be questioned, etc.) and
- The complainant can demonstrate reasonable cause for delay in making the complaint
It is at the discretion of the manager of the service if the time limit can be set aside.

Complaints Procedure:

Step 1

When a complaint is raised to staff, staff will try to resolve it immediately to the satisfaction of the complainant.

Step 2

Staff will apologise for the fact there was the need to complain in the first instance and explain the complaints process as described in the procedure steps.

Step 3

Staff will report the complaint to the most senior member of staff on duty and the complaint will be logged.

Step 4

Formal acknowledgement of all complaints received (whether verbal or written) will be sent within 3 working days to the complainant. This could be via letter or email. The Company will have a local system in place to manage out-of-hours and weekend complaints received.

The acknowledgement will include:

- An invitation to meet and discuss the complaint

- Who will be investigating the complaint
- How the investigation will be handled - the response should state what the investigation will be focused on
- A time limit for the investigation to be concluded. This should be 28 days; however, some cases may take longer, and the complainant will be made aware of this.
- The complaints procedure and contact details of bodies that can be accessed in the event of dissatisfaction with the outcome of the investigation

Step 5

Following a full investigation, a response letter will be sent, and this will include the following:

- A summary of the issue from the complainant's point of view
- Details of the evidence and sources consulted to investigate the issue fully and fairly.
- A presentation of the findings for each issue clearly and concisely described
- A conclusion, stating clearly whether the issue is "upheld", "partially upheld" or "not upheld"; unless it is ineligible, in which case the reason for this will be given, e.g. out of time or out of jurisdiction
- An explanation of the outcome and whether any remedial action or learning points arise from the investigation of that issue
- An apology where the issue is upheld, and shortcomings or failings have been found.
- The complainant's rights if not satisfied with the outcome to refer to The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- A signature from the responsible individual or sent by email in their name

Step 6

The complaint will be closed once confirmation has been received that there is satisfaction with the outcome. In the event of dissatisfaction, the Company will support the complainant to access further support (refer to section 5.6)

The Complaints Log

A record will be held of all complaints raised and contain the following information:

- Each complaint received
- Subject matter and outcome
- Details of any reason for delay where investigations took longer than the agreed response period
- The date the report of outcome was sent to the complainant

Where complaints relate to a client, a copy of the complaint will be held in their records so that the Client can reflect on the recommendations.

Where complaints are raised by telephone, the log will include date and time of the call, and this should be followed up with written confirmation of the areas discussed.

Where a complaint indicates the potential abuse of Clients, safeguarding policies will be followed as per local authority expectation and necessary notifications made to the

regulatory body. Where support is commissioned Gloucestershire County Council their reporting procedure for notifying them of complaints should be followed.

Where complaints are to be shared as part of learning, the complaint should be anonymised so there is no identifiable Client information.

Investigations

All investigations will be managed by using the following approach:

- Investigating the fact
- Assessing evidence
- Review of records
- Interviewing those involved

Where necessary, advice and support will be sourced via senior managers within the organisation. The complaint should be investigated by a member of staff with the knowledge, experience, and seniority to undertake the investigation robustly.

Confidentiality of information will be always considered, and staff will adhere to the confidentiality policies and relevant codes of practice.

If an investigation of a complaint results in disciplinary action of staff within the Company, the complaint will continue to its conclusion. The complainant will be informed that the investigation has led to disciplinary process, but the details of the outcome or ongoing investigation should remain confidential.

Unresolved Complaints

There are many bodies that can support or will need to be informed of unresolved complaints:

1. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (for those Clients that are funded by local authority-funded social services care or self-funded)

Individuals have the right to raise their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This is a free service and individuals can contact their Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman via:

- The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman PO Box 4771,
- Coventry CV4 0EH,
- Tel: 0845 602 1983 or 024 7682 1960,
- Fax: 024 7682 0001,
- advice@lgo.org.uk

Individuals should be advised that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman will not investigate the complaint until the provider has had the opportunity to respond and resolve the matter in the first instance.

2. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (For Clients that are NHS funded)

Individuals have the right to raise a concern about a service that is NHS funded. This is a free service and individuals can contact via:

- Telephone 0345 0154033
- Email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk
- Website www.ombudsman.org.uk
- Address Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP.

The Managing Partner(s) can also signpost individuals to Healthwatch and the local independent complaints advocacy services (ICAS).

3. Clinical Commissioning Groups

Individuals can make a complaint about a health service they are receiving or have received and can discuss this with the commissioner of the service. Local contact details can be located via: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/ccg-details/#ccg-e>

4. Professional Bodies

If a complaint involves the serious misconduct of a healthcare professional, their relevant professional body can be informed, and this is determined on an individual case basis in discussion with the Managing Partner(s).

For any external bodies managing complaints the Company will work with the external body providing information as requested within any agreed timescales expected.

Compliments

Receiving compliments is an opportunity to celebrate and recognise success. The Company will ensure that:

- All compliments are shared with staff and displayed in public area to highlight good practice
- Compliments are anonymised or permission sought before displaying
- Numbers of compliments received are logged as part of a quality assurance programme
- Verbal positive feedback from residents and relatives is also deemed as compliments and should be recorded and shared with colleagues
- Compliments form a core agenda item at staff, resident, and relative meetings.

Suggestions

Suggestions can be made verbally or in writing and generally are in response to seeking a means of changing practice for the better.

- Suggestions are not complaints but, in some circumstances, if they are not considered or actioned, they could lead to a complaint.
- When suggestions are raised in meeting or as part of a conversation, these should be documented and then outcomes of such suggestion recorded to show consideration
- Staff should be encouraged to share their suggestions or suggestions received by relatives and Clients to the Managing Partner(s)
- The Managing Partner(s) should consider implementing a suggestions system to encourage comments from Clients, staff, and visitors

Audit and Evaluation

The Company will monitor, review, and analyse all information received about the service as a means of continuously reviewing performance, quality, and safety.

The Company will also:

- Share themes and trends with Staff Members working for the Company.
- Ensure that staff are trained to deal with complaints and understand the procedure for managing complaints

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints should be investigated in the same way as named complaints. They should be logged and any corrective action necessary should be taken and logged.

One Complaint, One Response

Where more than one organisation is involved in the Client's Support, they, or their representative, should be able to complain to any of them and the Company will contact the other organisations, carry out a joint investigation and provide a single joint response. Clients should not have to contact each organisation separately.

If someone complains and the Company is not responsible for the service complained about, rather than turning them away, the Company should share the concerns with the correct organisation(s). You will need the individual's permission to do this. If the person prefers that their complaint is not shared with another organisation (or organisations), the Company should signpost them to the right organisation instead and provide the person with their contact details.

The Company will follow LGO guidance for managing this.

5. Definition

Compliment

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

Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, disappointment, or discontent. This could be in response to an act of omission, decision or act

- Complaints can be made in various ways and include:
 - Verbally
 - Electronically
 - Local feedback channels
 - Writing

Self-Funded Support

Self-funded support is defined as services that are paid for entirely by the person receiving it