Complaints Policy

Version 3 Approved 11/11/2026

HR & Remuneration Sub Committee

Reviewed Annually

VERSION	**Version 3**	DOCUMENT TYPE	**Policy**	DOCUMENT NAME	**Complaints Policy**
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OUR AIM

Active Lancashire is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. We welcome feedback and suggestions.
One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.
We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly.
We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction which calls for an immediate response.

WE AIM TO ENSURE THAT:

- making a compliment or complaint is as easy as possible
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- we respond in the right way, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review our complaints policy and procedures every two years
- we resolve informal concerns quickly and keep matters low- key where possible
- wherever possible, we enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred

This policy ensures that we provide guidelines for dealing with complaints about our services, facilities, staff and volunteers.

Complaints can be made in the following ways:

In writing to:
Active Lancashire
Office 1-4 Farington House
Lancashire Business Park
Centurion Way
Leyland
PR26 6TW

Email: **contact@activelancashire.org.uk**

Phone: **07465 759911**

Or if the complaint is from a staff member or volunteer, they should in the first instance contact their line manager / supervisor or another member of staff.

DEFINITION

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction, however it is expressed.
This would include complaints expressed face to face, via a phone call, in writing, via email or any other method.
All staff should have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an “expression of dissatisfaction” even when the word “complain” or “complaint” is not used.

PURPOSE

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Active Lancashire
Active Lancashire's responsibility will be to: acknowledge the formal complaint in writing; respond within a stated period of time; deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and take action where appropriate.

Complainant
A complainant's responsibility is to: bring their complaint to Active Lancashire's attention within 8 weeks of the issue arising; raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in Active Lancashire; explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date; allow Active Lancashire a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Active Lancashire's control.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Active Lancashire maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

PROCEDURE

Written records must be made by Active Lancashire at each stage of the procedure.

Stage 1

In the first instance, staff member(s) must establish the seriousness of the complaint. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Stage 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should be advised that a formal complaint may be made and the following procedure should be explained to them.
It may sometimes be appropriate for a different member of staff, preferably a member of the Management Team, to make this explanation.

- A formal complaint can be made either verbally or in writing. If verbally, a statement should be taken by a member of the Management Team, staff member or a supervisor.
- In all cases, the complaint must be passed on to a member of our Senior Leadership Team. In the event of a complaint about a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the complaint should be passed to a member of the Executive Leadership Team, and if the complaint is about a member of the Executive Leadership Team this must be passed on to the Chief Executive. If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, it must be passed to a Board member.
- The SLT / ELT member depending on the nature of the complaint, must acknowledge the complaint in writing within one week of receiving it.
- One of the above will investigate the complaint. Any conclusions reached should be discussed with the staff member involved and their Line Manager.
- The person making the complaint will receive a response based on the investigation within four weeks of the complaint being received. If this is not possible then a letter must be sent explaining why.

Stage 3

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision, then a sub-group of the Trustee Board will be convened.
- The sub-group will examine the complaint and may wish to carry out further interviews and examine files / notes. They will respond within four weeks in writing. Their decision will be final.