

G 04 Compliments, Comments & Complaints

The Charity values the views and opinions of the people we support, their family and friends, and other stakeholders. The Charity also welcomes and values compliments, comments, feedback and complaints as important sources of learning and will use feedback and complaint outcomes to identify improvements, share learning and strengthen the quality of services.

The procedure aims to provide an open, honest, flexible and personal approach to responding to complaints and concerns which focuses on people and their experiences and helps to improve the Charity's services and a person's experience and quality of life.

The Charity will:

- Provide clear information about how to make a complaint in varying formats depending on need
- Nominate a Senior Manager to deal with the complaint and ensure accountability to the Chief Executive
- Review complaints handling by the Risk Panel and analyse and learn from the data
- Report quarterly to the Board with data and analysis of complaints handling
- Deal with an "informal" complaint on the spot to reduce risk of escalation
- Acknowledge a complaint that cannot be dealt with informally within 3 working days and inform the complainant of the next steps and timing of any investigation.
- Ensure, where possible, the nominated person has a face-to-face meeting with the complainant to understand fully the nature of the complaint and the complainant's expectations
- Ensure the investigation is proportionate to the complaint
- Aim to complete the investigation and report back to the complainant within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint; where this is not possible, we will consult with the complainant
- Ensure that if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they are aware of their right to appeal to the Chief Executive within 5 working days of receiving the written decision.
- Agree with the complainant the timescale for further investigation, review and response.
- Use feedback and complaint outcomes to identify themes, agree actions, share learning with staff and improve services for the people we support.

The Charity will endeavour to:

- Adopt an open and non-defensive approach
- Enable concerns and complaints to be raised freely without fear and for questions asked to be answered.
- Recognise any distress caused and appreciate the value of an apology
- Ensure that the needs of vulnerable people are considered by involving friends, family, advocates and Independent Mental Capacity Advocates, where appropriate
- Ensure that the people we support whose care is funded by a local authority are aware of their right to complain to their local authority at any time, particularly if they are unhappy about the Charity's handling of their complaint.
- Ensure that the people we support who are self-funding are aware of their right to complain to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

- Provide contact details for CQC for adult services and Ofsted for registered children's services. For further information refer to Children's Policy CP530.

All employees must:

- Take all expressions of concern seriously and duly record. The recipient of the concern must directly inform their Line Manager or the next in line up to the level of Director of Care on the same day as the expression of concern is received.
- Not discuss the concern with anyone other than their line manager.
- Complete complaints handling training appropriate to their role, including how to recognise and record concerns, maintain confidentiality, respond sensitively, and escalate complaints promptly.
- Protect confidentiality at all times by sharing information only with those who need to know in order to respond to, investigate or learn from the complaint, unless disclosure is required to protect a person from harm or meet a legal or regulatory duty.

Complaint Handling Procedure**Stage 1 – Complaint investigation and response**

If you have a complaint about a service provided by St Cuthbert's Care, please raise it with the service in the first instance for a prompt resolution. Where the complaint cannot be resolved informally, it will be acknowledged within 3 working days. The acknowledgement will explain what will happen next, who is responsible for responding, and the expected timescale.

A nominated Senior Manager will consider the complaint, seek to understand the complaint and the outcome the complainant is seeking, and carry out a proportionate investigation. Where possible, the nominated person will offer to meet or speak with the complainant to ensure the complaint is fully understood.

The Charity will aim to provide a written Stage 1 response within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. If this is not possible, the Charity will explain the reason for the delay, agree a revised timescale where possible, and keep the complainant informed.

The Stage 1 response will set out the complaint considered, the findings, the decision, the reasons for the decision, any remedy or action to put things right, any learning or service improvement identified, and the complainant's right to request a Stage 2 review if they remain dissatisfied.

Stage 2 – Senior review and final response

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the Stage 1 response, they may request a Stage 2 review. Requests should normally be made as soon as possible after receiving the Stage 1 response, and the Charity will take a flexible approach where a complainant needs additional time or support to request review.

The Stage 2 review will be undertaken by the Chief Executive or another senior person who has not been directly involved in the Stage 1 investigation where practicable. The reviewer will consider whether the Stage 1 investigation was fair, proportionate and complete, whether the findings and outcome were reasonable, and whether any further action or remedy is required. The Charity will agree the timescale for the Stage 2 review with the complainant and will provide a written final response. The final response will explain the review findings, the final decision, the reasons for the decision, any further remedy or action to be taken, and any learning or service improvement arising from the complaint.

Stage 2 is the Charity's final stage of complaint handling. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after receiving the final response, or where it is appropriate for them to do so earlier, they may contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. People whose

care is funded by a local authority may also contact their local authority about their complaint at any time.

Contact details for Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints

Complaints or requests for a Stage 2 review can be made to Amanda Head, Director of Care at St Cuthbert's Care Head Office:

Telephone: 07825597896

Fax: 01912280177

Email: amanda.head@stcuthbertscare.org.uk

In writing: St Cuthbert's House, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 7PY

All records are stored securely and are retained in accordance with legal, contractual, GDPR, and organisational retention requirements.

Training, confidentiality and anonymous complaints

All staff will receive information and training on this procedure during induction and through periodic refresher training. Managers are responsible for ensuring staff understand how to support people to raise concerns, record complaints accurately, preserve confidentiality and escalate matters in line with this procedure.

Complaints will be handled confidentially and information will be shared only where necessary for the purpose of responding to, investigating or learning from the complaint. Records will be stored securely and managed in accordance with the Charity's data protection and confidentiality requirements.

Anonymous complaints will be taken seriously and considered on the information available. Where contact details are not provided, the Charity may be unable to acknowledge the complaint, seek further information or provide a response; however, the concern will still be recorded, reviewed and investigated where sufficient information is available and proportionate to do so.

Change of Version

Version	Date	Reason	Who	Next review date
1	19/12/25	CW 120 – G 04	GE	December 2026

21 August 2026