

## **Information sheet C12 – Complaints, Compliments and Comments**

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While we welcome any kind of comment, we take complaints particularly seriously. We try to provide the best service we can, but sometimes things do go wrong. If that happens we want to be told, so that we can make sure things work better for you in future, and so that we can learn lessons that will benefit other people.

Often the best thing to do when something small goes wrong is to mention it to the staff concerned, who may be able to sort things out on the spot. But if there is a more serious problem, or if you do not feel staff are listening to you, you have a right to make a complaint, and to have it properly investigated.

### **■ Who do I complain to?**

If you have a complaint about particular recommendations or decisions we have made, you should if possible first talk to the member of staff responsible.

If you have a complaint about one of the services which we have arranged, it will usually be best to start by contacting the provider of the service (for instance the organisation which employs your home carers, or the manager of a care home). However you can raise this issue with one of our staff who you are in contact with if you find that easier.

If you don't want to speak about the problem to the staff directly involved, or if you feel that they are not listening to you, you can contact our Complaints Team.

### **■ The Complaints Team**

The Team can help with complaints about adult social care services and NHS Continuing Health Care. Our Complaints Team is here to listen to whatever you want to tell us about our services. This includes compliments and other comments as well as complaints. We do not deal with complaints about hospital services, or most other NHS services, but we can give you advice if you are not sure who to complain to.

If you do have a complaint the Complaints Team will make sure that it is investigated as thoroughly as necessary, and that you get a full response to all the issues you raise, including advice on other options open to you if you are not satisfied with what we say. If you have a comment or compliment this will be passed on to the appropriate service area.

You can contact the Team by telephone on **(01670) 62 88 88**

or by writing to:

Care and Support Complaints Team  
Comments, Compliments and Complaints  
FREEPOST RLTX-LBXU-SHBS  
County Hall, Morpeth  
Northumberland NE61 2EF

We are happy to accept your comments, compliments and complaints by email to: [socialcarecomplaints@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:socialcarecomplaints@northumberland.gov.uk). (You can also use the address [CHCcomplaints@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:CHCcomplaints@northumberland.gov.uk) – it doesn't matter which address you use.)

## ■ What to tell us if you make a complaint

To deal with your complaint appropriately, we will need to know:

- Your name, address and contact details (please include a phone number)
- If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, their name and address, and your relationship to them. We will usually need to check with the person concerned whether they are happy for us to look into the complaint and to include personal information about them in preparing a response to your complaint
- What you are complaining about. Please give dates and other details if possible
- If you know them, the names of the people involved (for instance any members of staff whose actions you are complaining about, or who advised you to complain)
- What you would like us to do about this complaint to put things right.

If you phone us, we will talk you through the information that we need.

## ■ How we will handle your complaint

Members of the Team will:

- contact you to confirm receipt of your original complaint within three working days
- agree with you how you wish your complaint to be handled
- let you know how long we expect it to take to provide you with a detailed written response
- keep in touch with you while your complaint is being investigated.

The response we will send to you will include (where appropriate):

- a full explanation of circumstances surrounding your complaint
- an apology if the service has not been of an appropriate standard
- a summary of what we have learned as a result of the complaint investigation
- a summary of how the service will be improved in future.

We will also provide you with the contact details of the Ombudsman who you could ask to look into your complaint further if you are not satisfied with our response.