

Ferring Retirement Club CIO (Charity No. 1212151)

Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Ferring Retirement Club CIO (the '**Charity**') is a registered charity whose objects are: *"the relief of the elderly in any manner now or hereafter deemed charitable within Ferring and the surrounding area"*.
- 1.2** The Charity and its property are administered and managed by appointed trustees (the '**Trustees**') who are mindful that they have a legal obligation to act in the best interests of the Charity and its members.
- 1.3** The Charity strives for high standards in service delivery and welcomes feedback from members, volunteers and anyone who works with the Charity, on all aspects of its services.

2. Complaints policy statement

- 2.1** The objectives of the Charity's Complaints Policy and procedures are to:
- ensure that all members, volunteers and anyone who works with the Charity know how to make a complaint and how it will be handled
 - provide all members, volunteers and anyone who works with the Charity with a fair and effective way to complain about the services provided
 - ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear time frames
 - ensure that complaints are monitored to improve the Charity's services
- 2.2** The Charity recognises that members, volunteers and anyone who works with the Charity:
- have the right to raise concerns or complaints about its services
 - have access to clear information on how to voice complaints and concerns
- 2.3** The Charity has a complaints procedure that is open to everyone who receives or requests a service from the Charity or people acting on their behalf.
- 2.4** The Charity will:
- take seriously any concern or complaint and will look into it promptly, seeking resolution as quickly as possible
 - deal with complaints in line with this Complaints Procedure and Data Protection and Privacy Policy
 - maintain a register of all complaints, which will be reviewed regularly by the Trustees
 - review this Complaints Procedure as part of the process of monitoring the quality, effectiveness and non-discriminatory nature of the Charity's services

3. Complaints policy

The Charity will:

- Listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential, where possible
- Record, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with its Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated time frame
- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal

- Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented in order to ensure that there is no re-occurrence

4. Definition of a complaint

4.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, justified or not.

4.2 An individual may make a complaint if they feel that the Charity has:

- Failed to provide a service or an acceptable standard of service
- Made a mistake in the way the service was provided
- Failed to act in a proper way
- Provided an unfair service

5. Concern or complaint

5.1 It is important to establish the difference between a concern and a complaint. By taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage, the Charity aims to reduce the likelihood of their developing into formal complaints.

5.2 If an individual has any concerns about the Charity's actions, they should tell their Section Leader or a Trustee as soon as possible.

5.3 The Section Leader or Trustee concerned will endeavour to understand the concerns expressed by the individual and try to put things right.

5.4 If the individual is not happy with the response to their concern and wishes to make a formal complaint, they should follow the Complaints Procedure (**Section 6**)

6. Complaints Procedure

The Charity aims to settle the majority of complaints quickly and satisfactorily. It hopes that complaints might be resolved quickly by way of an apology or an acceptable explanation.

There are three stages to the complaints procedure:

Stage One – complaint

Stage Two – investigation

Stage Three – appeal

6.1 Stage One – Complaint

6.1.1 The complaint should be made by the complainant in writing, signed and dated, and addressed to the Chair. If preferred, the complainant may ask someone else to write it for them but the complainant must sign it.

6.1.2 The complaint should include the complainant's name, address, telephone number and email address, the nature and date of the complaint, and a statement of how they would like to see the matter resolved.

6.1.3 On receipt, the complaint will be allocated a reference number and logged in the complaints register.

6.1.4 The complainant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of their dated complaint as soon as practicable (the aim will be to do so within five working days).

6.2 **Stage Two – Investigation**

6.2.1 Investigations will be dealt with by the Chair. If a meeting between the Chair and the complainant is deemed necessary, this will take place as soon as practicable after receipt of the complaint (the aim will be to do so within seven working days). If the Chair is not available, the investigation will be delegated to another Officer of the Charity. (Officers of the Charity are the Chair; the Secretary and the Treasurer).

6.2.2 A written response will be provided to the complainant by the investigating Officer within twenty working days.

6.2.3 The complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome, including any recommendations/remedies made, such as the reviewing of policies and procedures, further training, or improvement to the Charity's services.

6.2.4 Where the complaint is upheld, a written apology will be offered.

6.2.5 If an individual remains dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage Two, they may appeal within fourteen working days of the date of the outcome and progress to Stage Three.

6.2.6 The complaints register will be updated and any pending complaints flagged so that they are followed up.

6.3 **Stage Three – Appeal**

6.3.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at Stage Two, or if the Chair considers that the complaint is of a very serious nature, it will be referred to the Trustees at a full Trustee Meeting.

6.3.2 If the complaint is about the Chair, the other Officers of the Charity will review Stage Two. They will recommend one of the following actions within twenty working days from the date the complainant stated they wanted to take the complaint to Stage Three:

- i. Uphold the action taken at Stage Two
- ii. Make changes to the Stage Two recommendation/actions

6.3.3 The complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome of Stage Three. The decision reached about this complaint will then be final.

6.3.4 If, after the three Stages of the Complaints Procedure have been completed, the complainant is still not satisfied with the result, they should be advised that there is no further right of appeal with the Charity but that they could approach the Charity Commission for advice. This should be done within one month of receiving the outcome from the appeal.

6.4 **Anonymous complaints**

Complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

7. **Data protection**

7.1 In order to process a complaint, the Charity will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides and which other people may give in response to the complaint.

The Charity will hold this data securely and use it only to address the complaint and always in accordance with the Charity's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

- 7.2 The identity of the person making the complaint will be known only to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public by the Charity. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances; for example, where allegations are made that involve the conduct of third parties.
- 7.3 The Charity will only retain complaint files for as long as strictly necessary with a long stop of seven years after the complaint has been closed. Data will be destroyed or deleted in a secure manner.

8. Monitoring and review

- 8.1 Complaints are an important tool, which will allow the Charity to learn about the services it provides. They provide a useful source of information about how individuals see those services and how improvements might be made. To ensure that the Charity can learn from complaints, subject to clause 7.3 above, the following data will be collected:
- Name and address of complainant
 - Name of person dealing with the complaint
 - Date of complaint
 - Nature of complaint
 - Date of response
 - Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the complaint
 - Lessons learnt
- 8.2 Complaints data will be considered on a regular basis by the Trustees. Wherever possible the data will be used to improve and develop the Charity's services.
- 8.3 This policy shall be reviewed by the Trustees every two years or as appropriate.

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