



## **Complaints Policy of LTC North East Ltd**

LTC North East Ltd views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at LTC North East Ltd knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of LTC North East Ltd.

### **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from customers, parents, service users, pool operators (from which we hire pool time) and other persons connected to our activities. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use LTC North East Ltd's Discipline and Grievance policies.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

### **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Company Directors

Review This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on: **15<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

Last reviewed: **10<sup>th</sup> February 2019**



## **Complaints Procedure of LTC North East Ltd.**

### **Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:**

**Written complaints** may be sent to;

LTC North East Ltd., 32 Harle Oval, Bowburn, Durham, DH6 5NZ

**or by e-mail to** [cdltc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cdltc@hotmail.co.uk)

Verbal complaints may be made by phone or in person to any of LTC North East Ltd's staff, or volunteers at any of our events or activities.

### **Receiving Complaints**

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to LTC North East Ltd.
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure

- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see Appendix 1 Resolving Complaints Stage One.

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to any Company Director **within 1 week**. On receiving the complaint, the Company Director records it as appropriate. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint **within a week**. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

### **Confidentiality and Whistle Blowing**

Sometimes a complainant will wish to remain anonymous. Sometimes a person making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration may wish to remain anonymous. It is always preferable to reveal your identity and provide us with your contact details. However, if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences that may occur should your identify be revealed to another party, then please inform us that you do not wish for us to divulge your identity and we will work to ensure your details are not disclosed.

We will always aim to keep a whistle blower's identity confidential where asked to do so although we cannot guarantee this. We may need to disclose your identity should the complaint lead to issues that need to be taken forward by other parties.

For example:

\*the police, fraud prevention agencies or other law enforcement agencies (to investigate or prevent crime, including fraud)

\*the courts (in connection with any court proceedings)

\*other third parties such as the regulator Ofqual, Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary, Health and Safety Executive and any others that are relevant.

Whistleblowers have some protection regarding disclosures under the current law, and LTC North East Ltd will always comply with our obligations regarding this and assist investigating authorities wherever possible.

### **Appendix 1 - Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints**

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"

- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
  - Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
  - Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
  - Don't promise things you can't deliver
  - Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
  - Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
  - Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal