



Care Ashore

Complaints Policy

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All policies and procedures location	Staff office at Care Ashore
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Objects of the charity

Are, for the public benefit, to provide exclusively charitable support services and grants to:

- Those men and women who are or have been seafarers, and their dependents, who need assistance by the provision of accommodation, financial allowances or grants and in other such ways as the board think fit.
- Those men and women who are or have been seafarers and who are sick, disabled, aged or infirm or those who require rest or convalescence by the provision and maintenance of a convalescent home or rest home or in other ways as the board think fit.
- To extend its services to those persons having an appropriate connection with the sea as the board think fit, that includes potential visitors and their families to Care Ashore.

Care Ashore believes that its service users are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our services and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the organisation. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all the parties involved.

Our policy is to:

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- Publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- Make sure everyone at the Care Ashore knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- Make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.



- 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 Care Ashore.

Where complaints come from

Complaints may come from any person or organisation that has a legitimate interest in Care Ashore.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who must use the Care Ashore's Grievance Procedure that can be found in the Employee Handbook, a copy of which is kept in the main office.

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 Board of Trustees.

External Complaints Procedure

Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to Care Ashore, Springbok Estate, Alfold, Surrey, GU6 8EX or by email at info@careashore.org

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 01403 752555 or in person to any of Care Ashore's staff at Springbok Estate, Alfold, Surrey, GU6 8EX.

All complaints must be brought to attention of the General Manager as soon as possible and a complaints form completed..

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:

- Complete the new complaints form from October 2019
- Write down the facts of the complaint.
- Take the complainants name, address and telephone number.



- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Care Ashore (for example: beneficiary, tenant)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next.
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainants own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints.

Resolving Complaints

1. 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 the General Manager, or in their absence their Deputy, within 2 working days. If the complaint is in regards to the General Manager, their deputy should be notified at the earliest opportunity, who will follow the same procedures.

On receiving the complaint, the General Manager records it in the complaints log. 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 2 working days. 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 one week. 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.

2. Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at the Board of Trustees level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chairman.



The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within 2 working days of receiving it (if only a postal address is known then a letter should be posted, 1st class, within that timescale). The acknowledgment should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chairman may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within two 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 upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions and any resulting action taken.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

3. External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in, can be found on their website at www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the General Manager means that they should not be the person handling the review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Try and keep matters in perspective as not all “whinges and moans” will lead to a formal complaint and careful sensitive handling can diffuse a situation at an early point.



- Remain calm and respectful throughout any conversation or correspondence.
- 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 persons 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 cannot 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

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or as and when there are changes in legislation relating to complaints procedures at Care Ashore.

All current management, including trustees and staff have read and understood the contents of this policy and all new staff will be required to read and sign this policy during their induction to Care Ashore.

Date	Print Name	Signature

