



Complaints Policy and Procedure

Version History

Date	Created by / Amended by	Comments	Owner
July 2025	Rory Massey. Board of Trustees	Reviewed, reformat	CEO
June 2025	Removal of Appendix1 document	Addition of Acceptance	CEO
Sept 2022	Governance Sub-Group	Minor amendments	CEO
Aug 2018	Rachel Aslet-Clark	Reviewed	CEO
April 2016	Rachel Aslet-Clark	Adopted	CEO

1. Policy Statement

The Apuldram Centre is committed to providing quality services and working in an open and accountable way within a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment. We value feedback from all sources including service users, carers, families, staff, volunteers, and the wider community. We recognise that, at times, people may feel dissatisfied with the service they receive. When this happens, we encourage them to raise concerns so that we can address the issue and improve and develop the way in which we provide our services.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out how individuals can make a complaint about any aspect of The Apuldram Centre's services or operations. It also outlines how we will handle and respond to complaints fairly, promptly, and transparently.

3. Scope

This policy applies to people who use our services and their families, carers, and advocates, staff and volunteers and members of the public.

4. Objectives and Guiding Principles

At The Apuldram Centre, we recognise that most concerns and issues raised by individuals who use our services, their families or carers, staff, or members of the public can be resolved informally and at an early stage. We are committed to fostering an open and responsive environment where people feel comfortable raising concerns and confident that they will be listened to.

Our primary objective is to encourage early resolution of concerns by:

- Listening actively and respectfully to the views of the complainant.
- Responding proportionately and appropriately to the nature and seriousness of the concern.
- Seeking informal resolution wherever possible and practical, without the need for escalation into formal procedures.

However, we also acknowledge that some concerns may not be resolved informally, or that individuals may prefer to use a formal process. In such cases, we are committed to ensuring that a clear, structured, and accessible complaints process is in place.

Specifically, we aim to:

- Clearly explain to complainants or their representatives the procedures and timescales for raising and resolving formal complaints, including how to escalate a complaint if it is not satisfactorily resolved by frontline staff or managers.
- Provide our complaints and appeals procedures in a written format and in alternative formats that meet the individual's communication needs, including easy-read versions or through the support of an advocate.
- Ensure that all formal complaints are properly recorded and documented to support transparency and consistency.
- Regularly review the frequency, themes, and trends of complaints to identify any patterns or recurring issues that may require attention.
- Where applicable, implement service improvements as a result of complaint investigations and learning recommendations, thereby contributing to continuous improvement in the quality of our services.

By fulfilling these objectives, The Apuldram Centre aims to maintain trust, promote accountability, and ensure that the voices of the people we serve are heard and acted upon. Accordingly, the guiding principles in complaint handling at The Apuldram Centre are:

- **Accessibility:** Complaints can be made by anyone and in any reasonable format (verbal, written, email, or through an advocate).
- **Fairness:** All complaints will be treated seriously and with respect, regardless of the nature or tone.
- **Confidentiality:** Complaints will be handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection laws.
- **Responsiveness:** We aim to resolve complaints quickly (*timeframes provided below*) and learn from them to improve services.

5. Procedure

The following procedures are contained in this document:

- Receiving a complaints
- Resolving complaints
 - Complaints procedure
 - Complaints appeal procedure
 - Complaints holding letter/email.

Receiving a complaint

The person (staff) who receives an email/written/phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint if taken over the phone or in person.
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number.

- Inform the appropriate line manager.

Resolving Complaints

- The line manager will:
 - Identify if the complainant wishes to have the matter resolved informally or formally.
 - Informal complaints should be investigated by the responsible line manager, fed back to the complainant and any feedback or improvement recommendations shared with their line manager.
 - For formal complaints the line manager will:
 - Inform the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
 - If appropriate, inform their line manager (who will assign a different complaint investigator if required)
 - 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.
 - Create a record of the complaint in the Complaints Database.
- The complaint investigator will:
 - Formally acknowledge within 48 hours (2 working days) the complaint with the complainant and attach/enclose a copy of the Complaints Procedure (Appendix A).
 - Commence a complaint investigation.
 - Provide a regular update to their line manager.
 - Provide their line manager with a draft investigation report prior to sending their investigation response to the complainant.
 - Update the complaint record.
 - Send their findings and complaint to the complainant along with the complaints appeal procedure.
 - Update the Complaints Log where the Organisation's Senior Management Team (SMT) will review any new entries every month.



We would like to know if there is anything that you are not happy about, or if you want to talk to us about your support. Please feel free to come and see us at

The Apuldram Centre for a chat.



Compliment



Complain



Ask a question

Telephone Apuldram 01243 783 370

Email Apuldram info@apuldram.org

Telephone Rory 01243 216 845

Email Rory rory.massey@apuldram.org

Appendix A - Complaints Procedure

How to Make a Complaint

Stage 1

We, the Apuldrum Centre, want to hear people's views on our services. It helps us to learn, improve and provide the services that you want. Please tell us if you are unhappy with our service in any way. We will endeavour to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction.

We hope that the majority of concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly by the relevant service manager. You will find their contact details in the box at the bottom of page two of this document.

Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly, listening to the views of the complainant.
- respond proportionately to the concern.

If you have taken this step and are still not satisfied, you may wish to take things further. You can do this by using our "Stage 2 Complaint Procedure" which is outlined below.

Stage 2

1. Making a complaint

- Please do this as soon as possible after the event as this will help us to deal with your complaint more effectively. Please put your complaint in writing and send or email it to the manager of the appropriate service, the Chief Executive, or the Chair of Trustees at the address at the end of this document (if the complaint relates to the Chief Executive).
- Please tell us if you have already talked to someone at the Apuldrum Centre about your complaint and what happened. If you haven't felt able to talk to anyone at the Apuldrum Centre about it, please say why this was.
- To help us resolve your issue, please explain what it is you are complaining about and give as much detail as you can, including times, dates and places.
- If your complaint is about a person, please give their name.
- If you are complaining about a person, they will be given a copy of your complaint. We will not give them your contact details.
- Please include copies of any documents which may support your complaint.
- Please give your name and contact details, including an email address and telephone number
- Please date your complaint.

- All stage 2 complaints must be put in *writing and you may want to ask someone else to do this for you. (*Our accessible complaints procedure enables complainants to communicate with us in their preferred way)

2. Acknowledging your complaint

Upon receipt of your complaint the service manager or complaint investigator will write to or email you confirming that they have received your complaint.

3. Investigating your complaint

The service manager or assigned complaint investigator is responsible for handling your complaint and making sure there is a full investigation. They may contact you or ask to see you to discuss your complaint. If you do this face to face you may bring someone with you who is not connected to the complaint. If your complaint is about the service manager, it will be dealt with by their line manager or complaint investigator.

4. Responding to your complaint

The manager will write to you within eight weeks of your complaint being received telling you the result of the investigation. They will tell you whether your complaint has been upheld or not. The letter will also let you know where you can appeal if you are not satisfied.

5. Anonymous complaints

The Organisation accepts a complainant's right to confidentiality and will endeavour to do everything it can to ensure they remain anonymous if they wish to. However, whilst anonymous complaints are accepted and valued, they are discouraged as they can present problems when investigations occur e.g. not being able to verify details or timescales etc.

Should the Organisation receive an anonymous complaint, the procedure above is followed to its fullest, however, feedback may not be able to be provided due to the complainant's anonymity.

You can withdraw your complaint at any time. Please write to the person handling your complaint.

Stage 3

How to appeal

If your complaint is not upheld and you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, you are entitled to appeal. The letter about the result of your complaint will tell you who to send your appeal to.

General	info@apuldrum.org	01243 783370
Supported Living	kelly.shaw@apuldrum.org	01243 783370
Day Centre/Hub	rachel.wilson-glover@apuldrum.org	01243 783370
Administrative	Lianne.jones@apuldrum.org	01243 783370
Finance	karen@apuldrum.org	01243 783370
Food, café, shop	info@apuldrum.org	01243 783370
Chief Executive	rory.massey@apuldrum.org	01243 783370
Chair of Trustees	steve.blaber@apuldrum.org	01243 783370

Complaints Appeal Procedure

1. Request an Appeal

Please write to the person handling your appeal. Give the reasons that you do not agree with the outcome of your complaint and ask for an appeal. Please do this within four weeks of getting the letter about the result of your complaint. Please include your contact details.

2. Acknowledging your appeal request

The person handling your appeal will write to you to confirm they have received your letter.

3. Conducting your appeal

The person handling your appeal will look at the original investigation to make sure it was handled appropriately. They may get in touch with you to ask questions about your complaint and they may bring in an independent person who may also get in touch with you. If you do this face to face you can bring someone with you who is not connected to the complaint to provide you with support. The appeals manager will then consider whether the findings and recommendations of the investigation into your original complaint were reasonable.

4. Result of your appeal

You will get a letter within eight weeks of your appeal telling you the result. If the appeals manager does not agree with your dissatisfaction about the outcome of the original complaint you may be able to appeal to an independent body and if so, the letter will give you details.

CQC

The Apuldrum Centre Supported Living service is registered with and regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for the provision of personal care.

If the complainant feels that they still have not had their complaint dealt with adequately then they can take their complaint to the Care Quality Commission at the following address:

CQC HSCA Compliance

Citygate

Gallowgate

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 4PA