

Complaints & Feedback Policy

1. Policy Statement

West Heanton is committed to providing high-quality care and maintaining open, honest communication with clients, families, visitors and professionals. We welcome all feedback — positive or negative — and view complaints as opportunities to learn, improve and strengthen trust.

Everyone has the right to raise a concern, make a complaint or share feedback without fear, bias or disadvantage. All complaints will be handled confidentially, fairly, and in line with our Risk & Response model, ensuring a safe and transparent process.

This policy is not used to apportion blame or determine negligence. It exists to ensure concerns are listened to, understood and resolved promptly.

2. Aim of This Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- Clients, families, visitors and professionals know how to make a complaint
- Complaints are handled promptly, respectfully and without bias
- People feel safe and confident raising concerns
- Complaints are resolved at the earliest opportunity
- Learning from complaints leads to service improvement
- All complaints are processed through our Risk & Response model

3. How to Make a Complaint or Give Feedback

We offer several easy ways to raise concerns or share feedback:

Speak to a Team Member

You can speak to any member of the team at any time. They will listen and ensure your concern is passed to the Duty Manager.

Speak to the Duty Manager

You can contact the Duty Manager directly by phone or in person.

Write to Us

You can submit a written complaint by email or letter:

Email: office@westheanton.co.uk

Post: West Heanton, Shebbear, North Devon

Raise a Concern on Behalf of Someone Else

Advocates, relatives or representatives may raise concerns, provided they have the client's consent where required.

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4. Our Risk & Response Model

All complaints are processed through our **Risk & Response model**, ensuring fairness, confidentiality and proportionality.

Step 1 – Receive & Record

- Every complaint is acknowledged
- Details are recorded confidentially and given a R&R number
- Immediate safety concerns are addressed

Step 2 – Risk Assessment

We assess the level of risk:

- **Low:** quick resolution, reassurance, explanation
- **Moderate:** investigation, review of practice, follow-up
- **High:** formal investigation, safeguarding referral if required

Step 3 – Response & Resolution

We respond in a way that is:

- Fair
- Transparent
- Evidence-based
- Proportionate to the level of risk

Step 4 – Learning & Improvement

We identify improvements, update practice and share learning with the team.

5. Verbal Complaints

Verbal complaints are often resolved quickly. When someone raises a concern verbally:

- The team listens respectfully and calmly
- We aim to resolve the issue immediately where possible
- If not resolved, the Duty Manager becomes involved
- The concern is recorded confidentially
- The person raising the concern is kept informed
- No team member should be defensive, dismissive or biased

If the concern cannot be resolved verbally, we may ask for the details in writing so we can investigate fully.

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6. Written Complaints

Written complaints follow a structured process:

Investigation

- A named Manager oversees the investigation
- Further information may be requested
- Consent is obtained if someone complains on behalf of a client
- Investigations aim to be completed within **28 days**
- If more time is needed, we will explain why

Outcome

- A written response is provided
- A meeting can be offered if helpful
- We explain findings, actions taken and next steps
- We provide information on how to escalate if needed

7. Escalation Options

If someone is unhappy with the outcome, they may contact:

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA Email: enquiries.southwest@cqc.org.uk

(Please note: CQC does not resolve individual complaints but welcomes feedback about services.)

8. Confidentiality & Fairness

All complaints are handled:

- In confidence
- Without bias
- Without disadvantage to the person raising the concern
- With respect for everyone involved

No one will ever be treated differently because they raised a concern.

9. Learning & Continuous Improvement

Complaints help us improve. We:

- Review outcomes
- Identify changes to practice
- Share learning with the team
- Audit complaints every six months
- Update policies when needed

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10. Training

Our Managers receive training in:

- Listening to concerns
- Responding to complaints
- Professional communication
- Risk & Response procedures
- Safeguarding and transparency

11. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if guidance changes.