

Complaints Policy

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1. Introduction

LifeLine Projects (LifeLine) is committed to providing an excellent service to its beneficiaries and other stakeholders, working in open and accountable ways that build trust and respect.

This policy is intended to ensure that all complaints from beneficiaries who use our services are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

2. Complaints Policy

2.1 Purpose

LifeLine improves its services by listening and responding to the views of beneficiaries and other stakeholders by responding positively to complaints and by putting mistakes right. We are committed to dealing with complaints fairly, impartially and quickly. To ensure we meet this commitment we will:

- Ensure the process for making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- Treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response.
- Treat complaints of discrimination and prejudice seriously; they will never be accepted, excused or dismissed.
- Deal with complaints promptly, politely, and confidentially.
- Aim to keep complainants informed about progress and the results of any investigation.
- Respond to complaints in the correct way e.g. with an explanation, an apology and/or information on any action taken e.g. changes made to a service following a complaint.
- Set timescales for responding to complaints and monitor our responsiveness against these timescales.
- Learn from complaints and use them to improve the services we offer.
- Advise our beneficiaries of their right to complain to a third party, if applicable.

Complaints not covered by this policy are:

- Any matter that is subject to legal action.
- Any complaint that is deemed to be vexatious or malicious following investigation
- Safeguarding matters and allegations.
- Staff grievances.

2.2 Equality, diversity and inclusion

LifeLine Projects is committed to ensuring all complaints are handled free from any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

LifeLine Projects will monitor this policy in order to identify whether it is having an adverse impact on any group of individuals and act accordingly.

2.3 Data protection

To help us handle complaints, we will keep a record of all the information we gather. All information held and processed shall be treated in confidence. Such information will be shared with representatives of LifeLine Projects only to the extent required to resolve the complaint in accordance with this policy and procedure.

All personal information collected by LifeLine Projects shall be handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.

2.4 Principles of how we deal with complaints

- If matters arise at any time during an investigation that warrant investigation under the disciplinary procedure, or a criminal investigation, the complaints procedure will be suspended until those investigations are concluded. Similarly, the complaints procedure will be suspended if a complainant is actively seeking legal redress.
- The relevant Director will be informed when a formal written complaint is received.
- Where a complaint is made against a member of staff, they will be informed of the support available to them.

- A complete record of the entire process will be kept, including copies of all reports, notes of interviews and other relevant information.
- LifeLine may at any stage of the formal complaints procedure review a complaint and give a decision without a formal investigation.

3. Contact Details for Complaints

Complaints can be made verbally in person, by telephone, email or letter.

The table below details the contact details of the services delivered by LifeLine:

Table 1

Programme	Contact name for complaint	Address	Email address	Telephone number
Families	Tilishia Green Adult Services Manager	LifeLine Projects LifeLine House 25 Neville Road Dagenham RM8 3QS	tilishiagreen@lifelineprojects.co.uk	020 8597 2900
Healthwatch	Manisha Modhvadia Healthwatch Manager	See LifeLine House address above	manisha.modhvadia@healthwatchbarkinganddagengham.co.uk	020 8597 2900
Little Learners St. Nicholas	Jodie Richards Acting Trainee Nursery Manager	15 St Nicholas Avenue Elm Park Essex RM12 4PT	jodierichards@lifelineprojects.co.uk	01708 450 781
Little Learners Ambleside	Terri Stanley Acting Trainee Nursery Manager	1 Ambleside Avenue Elm Park Essex RM12 5ES	terristanley@lifelineprojects.co.uk	01708 579 449
Young People's Services	Head of Young Peoples Services	See LifeLine House address above	Vacant	020 8597 2900

Where a complaint cannot be resolved by the member of staff indicated in the table above, or where individuals shown above are the source of the complaint, the following staff should be contacted:

Table 2

Service	Contact name for complaint	Email address	Telephone number
Little Learners	Terri Noone Senior Nursery Manager	terrinoone@lifelineprojects.co.uk	01708 579 449
Faith Action and Healthwatch	Daniel Singleton National Director of FaithAction	danielsingleton@lifelineprojects.co.uk	020 8597 2900
All other complaints	Julia Ward Head of Support Services	juliaward@lifelineprojects.co.uk	

4. Complaints Procedure: How we will deal with your Complaint

Any beneficiary can make a complaint, including young people. Complaints may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a beneficiary. Young people may need a responsible adult to support them. In both cases, third parties, or responsible adults must have the appropriate consent.

4.1 Informal Complaints Procedure

- a) In the first instance we would encourage you to tell us as soon as possible if you are unhappy with our service so that we can understand your concerns and quickly try to put things right for you.

Providing information or discussing misunderstandings and misconceptions at this early stage may enable your concern or complaint to be successfully resolved.

You can discuss your concern with any member of staff, or with a manager detailed in table1 in section 3 of this policy.

- b) We aim to resolve informal complaints as soon as they are raised but within 5 working days at the latest.
- c) In most instances informal complaints will not receive a formal written response.

LifeLine recognises that many concerns raised will be informal, and we aim to deal with these quickly. In the first instance we would expect any complaint to be raised directly with the member of staff concerned. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

4.2 Formal Complaints Procedure

- a) The staff member receiving your complaint will acknowledge your concern or complaint in writing (or in your preferred method of communication) within 2 days. They will contact you to acquire as much information as possible.

At this stage it may be possible to agree resolution actions and resolve the complaint immediately.

- b) Where immediate resolution cannot be agreed, a member of staff will be nominated to investigate your complaint. We will let you know who this is and explain how your concern or complaint will be handled.
- c) The nominated member of staff will gather information from you and other relevant sources and carefully evaluate that information to decide on the outcome of your complaint.
- d) They will act to resolve your complaint within 10 working days, and will advise you of the outcome in writing, explaining the decision and how it has been reached.

4.3 Stage 3: Appeals

- a) If you are not happy with the outcome at this stage, you will be able to appeal. Let us know within 10 days of receiving your written complaint outcome from us that you want to appeal.
- b) Your appeal should be sent to the member of staff who sent you the complaint outcome letter and state why you are appealing.
- c) Your concern or complaint will be passed to a manager who has not previously been involved with your complaint.
- d) The manager will review the facts and consider all the evidence to decide if your appeal is upheld.
- e) They will share their findings and confirm their decision to you in writing within 10 working days. We will keep you informed if we cannot respond within 10 working days.
- f) The decision at the end of this stage is final.

4.4 Third Party Recourse

If you are still not satisfied you can take your concern or complaint to a third party where one exists for the services delivered by LifeLine, as detailed in the table below:

Type of complaint	Third party organisation to complain to	Contact details
Data protection	Information Commissioner's Office	Make a complaint about data protection and personal information ICO
Little Learners	Ofsted	Telephone number: 0300 123 4666 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

5. Recording and Monitoring Complaints

Formal complaints received must be notified to relevant manager where appropriate, and to that manager's line manager within two days of receipt.

The relevant member of staff/manager will:

- File all documents relating to the complaints in the relevant Complaints folder on the 'S' drive. Information retained should include all correspondence relating to the complaint, including details of how the complaint was resolved and any actions taken to improve policy, process or services.
- Formal complaints will be raised as an issue in scorecards for services delivered to children, young people and adults.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for implementing LifeLine Project's strategy and policies and processes throughout the organisation, including the complaints management system.

6.2 Heads of Services/Directors

Heads of Services/Directors are responsible for:

- Developing and encouraging good customer care practice within their teams.
- Ensuring staff under their management are clear about their responsibilities under the Complaints policy and procedures.
- Leading on the complaint's appeals process.

6.3 Head of Support Services

Is responsible for:

- Raising any risks associated with complaints with the CEO.
- Identifying and sharing good practice.

6.4 Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- Developing and encouraging good customer care practice within their teams.
- Ensuring staff under their management are clear about their responsibilities under the Complaints policy and procedures.
- Promptly responding to complaints, informal and formal.
- Informing the relevant Head of Service/Director of any formal complaints and appeals received.

6.5 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Practising good customer care in their day-to-day work with beneficiaries.
- Assisting beneficiaries by providing details of how to make a complaint.
- Promptly responding to informal complaints.
- Informing the relevant Manager of formal complaints received.
- Implementing best practice.

7. Implementation and monitoring

7.1 Implementation

All staff will have access to this policy on SharePoint. This policy is also published on LifeLine's website - [Complaints Policy](#)

7.2 Process for monitoring implementation and effectiveness

For this policy, the following monitoring processes are in place.

Standard	Monitoring Process
Record of all complaints maintained in Complaint folders on the 'S' drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaints added as an issue on scorecard, risk level assigned and reviewed at scorecard meetings• Complaints discussed at team meetings, so staff are aware of resolution actions/changes to policy or processes etc.

8. Dissemination of and access to the policy

Once approved, this policy will be available on SharePoint and the previous versions of the policy and associated documents removed. The Head of Support Services will keep a record of this.

9. Related documents

- Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham Complaints Policy
- Little Learners Complaints Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

10. Definitions

The following list is a description of the meaning of key terms used in this policy.

Term	Description of Term
Customer	An individual who engages with, or receives a service delivered by LifeLine.
Complaint	A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction received either informally or formally about the standard of service, actions, or lack of actions, by LifeLine (or our partners) affecting an individual customer, group of beneficiaries or other stakeholders.
Complainant	A customer, or any of the following acting on behalf of a customer, who is receiving or has received services of any kind from LifeLine, or our partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ person (or nominated advocate)○ organisation○ institution/authority/professional body○ elected member (MP etc).
Formal complaint	A formal complaint can occur where: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of an informal complaint and expressly requests to raise a formal complaint (this can still be done verbally)• a written complaint is received.
Informal complaint	A complaint made verbally.

11. Version Control Sheet

Version	Date	Author(s)	Status	Comment
1 to 3	N/A	N/A	Approved	Historic issues 2006 to 2012
4	28/05/2012	N/A	Approved	Initial issue of new format
5	10/02/2013	N/A	Approved	Updated to show monitoring procedure
6	07/12/2015	Julia Ward	Approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General rewrite of policy • Merged clients' complaints procedure (Work Programme) and Customer Complaints Procedure, both dated January 2013 into this once policy
7	04/01/2017	Julia Ward	Approved	Annual update and inclusion of compliments procedure
8	28/07/2020	Julia Ward	Approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated ICO details. • Paragraph added about how to deal with complaints from external organisations • Overall policy update
9	06/11/2023	Julia Ward	Approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall policy refresh
10	04/02/2025	Julia Ward	Approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall policy refresh