



Phoenix Support

Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy

Family values with professional structure

V1 | May 2026

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1. Purpose

Phoenix Support welcomes complaints, compliments and comments from people who use our service, families, representatives, advocates, staff, commissioners, professionals and other stakeholders.

The purpose of this policy is to make sure that concerns and complaints are:

- easy to raise;
- listened to and taken seriously;
- acknowledged and responded to in a fair and timely way;
- investigated properly and proportionately;
- used to improve the quality and safety of the service;
- escalated to safeguarding, CQC, commissioners, emergency services or other bodies where required.

Phoenix Support will not treat anyone less favourably because they have made a complaint, raised a concern or supported someone else to complain.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints, compliments and comments about Phoenix Support's care and support services, including domiciliary care, supported living support, outreach support and the regulated activity of Personal care.

This policy applies to feedback from:

- people using Phoenix Support services;
- family members, friends, advocates or representatives;
- staff or former staff where the issue relates to service quality or safety;
- commissioners or care managers;
- health and social care professionals;
- members of the public;
- other organisations involved in a person's care or support.

Staff employment grievances are managed under the Grievance Procedure. Whistleblowing concerns are managed under the Whistleblowing Policy. Safeguarding concerns must be escalated immediately under the Safeguarding Policy, even if they are also being handled as a complaint.

Where a complaint relates to housing, tenancy, repairs or landlord responsibilities, Phoenix Support will help the person contact the relevant landlord or housing provider. Where the complaint includes both care/support and housing issues, Phoenix Support will identify which parts it is responsible for and will work with the landlord or other organisation where appropriate.

3. Definitions

3.1 Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about Phoenix Support's service, actions or lack of action, however it is made. A person does not have to use the word 'complaint' for Phoenix Support to treat it as a complaint.

Examples may include concerns about:

- missed, late or shortened calls;
- staff conduct, attitude or communication;
- lack of continuity of staff;
- care not being delivered as agreed;
- medication support;
- poor record keeping;

- dignity, respect, privacy or choice;
- failure to respond to changing needs;
- safety, safeguarding or neglect;
- communication with the office or on-call service;
- concerns raised by relatives, representatives or professionals;
- complaint handling itself.

3.2 Comment

A comment is feedback, suggestion or observation about the service. Comments may be positive, neutral or critical and may help Phoenix Support improve.

3.3 Compliment

A compliment is positive feedback about the service, a staff member, team or outcome.

3.4 Service request

A service request is a request for Phoenix Support to do something or put something right, such as updating a rota, correcting information, arranging a call back, reviewing a support task or contacting a professional. A service request may become a complaint if the person is dissatisfied with the response, delay or outcome.

4. Principles

Phoenix Support will:

1. make it easy for people to complain or give feedback;
2. accept complaints verbally, in writing, by telephone, email, text, form, in person or through a representative;
3. provide accessible information and reasonable adjustments where needed;
4. support people to use advocates, representatives, interpreters or family support where appropriate;
5. acknowledge complaints promptly;
6. investigate complaints fairly, objectively and proportionately;
7. keep complainants informed;
8. provide clear written responses wherever possible;
9. protect confidentiality and data protection rights;
10. act immediately where a complaint suggests abuse, neglect, serious injury, unsafe care, criminal activity or risk of harm;
11. apologise and put things right where Phoenix Support has fallen short;
12. record complaints, outcomes, learning and actions;
13. monitor themes and trends to improve the service.

5. How to complain or give feedback

A person can complain or give feedback in any way that works for them. They can:

- speak to any Phoenix Support staff member;
- contact the Phoenix Support office;
- contact the Registered Manager;
- contact the Nominated Individual;
- contact a Director;
- use a complaints form;
- ask a family member, friend, advocate, professional or representative to complain on their behalf;
- raise concerns during a review, welfare check, phone call, visit or meeting.

Phoenix Support Ltd

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Phoenix Support will also maintain an easy-read complaints leaflet and complaint form for people who need information in a more accessible format.

6. Support to make a complaint

Phoenix Support will help people to make a complaint if they need support. This may include:

- explaining the process clearly;
- helping the person write down their complaint;
- providing easy-read or large print information;
- allowing extra time;
- involving a family member, friend or representative with consent;
- signposting to advocacy;
- making reasonable adjustments for disability, communication or sensory needs;
- arranging a meeting or phone call;
- supporting people who lack capacity to be represented appropriately.

Where a person lacks capacity to make a specific complaint decision, Phoenix Support will act in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and best interests principles.

7. Complaint escalation and immediate safety action

Phoenix Support will triage every complaint or concern when it is received.

7.1 Standard complaint route

The normal route is:

Complaint received by any staff member -> record and pass to office / Registered Manager / appropriate senior person -> acknowledge complaint -> investigate -> respond -> agree actions and learning -> close or escalate to Stage 2 if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

7.2 Urgent or serious escalation route

If the complaint or concern suggests immediate risk, abuse, neglect, serious injury, unsafe care, a criminal offence, data breach, serious medication error, unexplained injury, missing person risk, failure of a critical visit, or risk to life, staff must not wait for the complaints process.

The staff member must immediately contact the office, on-call manager or senior manager. If there is immediate danger, they must contact emergency services first.

The escalation route is:

Staff member / person receiving concern -> office or on-call manager -> Registered Manager and/or Nominated Individual -> Director where required -> external escalation where required.

External escalation may include:

- emergency services;
- GP, NHS 111, ambulance or other health professional;
- Kent County Council safeguarding;
- commissioner or care manager;
- CQC statutory notification;
- police;

- RIDDOR/HSE;
- ICO for data protection incidents;
- insurer where there may be a claim or serious incident.

A complaint that includes safeguarding concerns must be managed under the Safeguarding Policy as well as this policy. The complaint investigation must not delay action needed to protect a person from harm.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
All staff	Listen respectfully to concerns; take complaints seriously; reassure the person that complaints are welcomed and will not affect care; record the concern accurately; pass it to the appropriate manager without delay; escalate urgent safety or safeguarding concerns immediately; maintain confidentiality; cooperate with investigations.
Registered Manager	Ensure complaints about the regulated activity are recorded, investigated, responded to and used for learning. Ensure complaints linked to safeguarding, Duty of Candour, CQC notification, commissioners or serious incidents are escalated appropriately.
Nominated Individual	Provide governance oversight and review serious, repeated, complex or regulatory complaints, including complaints involving the Registered Manager or wider service governance.
Directors	Provide senior oversight, escalation and approval where complaints involve major risk, reputational risk, regulatory concern, serious safeguarding, legal/insurance issues, conflict of interest or unresolved Stage 2 matters.
Complaint handler	Investigate fairly and proportionately. The complaint handler must be sufficiently independent and competent. Where possible, the person handling Stage 2 should not be the same person who handled Stage 1.

9. Stage 1 complaints process

9.1 Receiving and logging the complaint

Phoenix Support will record the complaint, including:

- date received;
- name of complainant, unless anonymous;
- person affected;
- preferred contact method;
- consent or representative details where relevant;
- summary of complaint;
- desired outcome;
- immediate safety concerns;
- whether safeguarding, Duty of Candour, CQC, commissioner or other escalation is required;
- complaint handler;
- actions taken;
- response date;
- outcome and learning.

9.2 Acknowledgement

Phoenix Support will acknowledge complaints within 3 working days wherever possible.

The acknowledgement will confirm:

- the complaint has been received;

- what Phoenix Support understands the complaint to be about;
- who will handle it;
- how the person will be contacted;
- expected timescale for response;
- any immediate action already taken.

If the complaint is urgent, Phoenix Support will act immediately and will not wait for the written acknowledgement process.

9.3 Investigation

The investigation will be proportionate to the seriousness and complexity of the complaint. It may include:

- reviewing care plans, risk assessments, rotas, MAR/eMAR records, care notes, incident records, call monitoring, communication records or audit records;
- speaking with the complainant;
- speaking with the person using the service where appropriate;
- speaking with staff involved;
- speaking with family, representatives, care managers or professionals where appropriate and lawful;
- reviewing policies, procedures and training records;
- considering safeguarding, medication, staffing, communication, dignity, record keeping or continuity issues;
- identifying whether any immediate action is required.

9.4 Stage 1 response

Phoenix Support will aim to provide a Stage 1 written response within 10 working days of acknowledging the complaint.

Where this is not possible, Phoenix Support will explain the reason for delay, agree a revised timescale, and keep the complainant updated.

The response will include:

- the complaint issues considered;
- what was investigated;
- the decision or findings;
- whether the complaint is upheld, partly upheld or not upheld;
- reasons for the decision;
- apology where appropriate;
- actions taken or planned;
- timescales for outstanding actions;
- learning identified;
- how to escalate to Stage 2 if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

10. Stage 2 review

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 1 response, they may ask for the complaint to be reviewed at Stage 2.

Phoenix Support will acknowledge a Stage 2 request within 5 working days wherever possible.

The Stage 2 review will normally be carried out by a Director, Nominated Individual or another appropriate senior person who was not the Stage 1 complaint handler, wherever possible.

The Stage 2 review will consider:

- whether the Stage 1 investigation was fair and proportionate;
- whether all complaint points were addressed;
- whether evidence was properly considered;
- whether the outcome was reasonable;

- whether further action, apology, remedy or learning is required;
- whether any external escalation should have occurred or is now required.

Phoenix Support will aim to provide a final Stage 2 response within 20 working days of acknowledging the Stage 2 request.

Where this is not possible, Phoenix Support will explain the reason for delay, agree a revised timescale, and keep the complainant updated.

The Stage 2 response is Phoenix Support's final response under this complaints procedure.

11. External escalation

If a person remains dissatisfied after Phoenix Support's final response, they may contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman can consider adult social care complaints, including care funded privately, funded by a local authority, arranged by a local authority or provided directly by a council.

Organisation	Contact details
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	Website: www.lgo.org.uk Telephone: 0300 061 0614
Care Quality Commission	Website: www.cqc.org.uk Telephone: 03 000 616 161

Where care is funded or arranged by Kent County Council, the person may also choose to complain to Kent County Council.

CQC does not usually resolve individual complaints for people. However, people can share concerns with CQC because the information may help CQC monitor, inspect and regulate services.

Where a complaint relates to housing, tenancy, rent, repairs or landlord matters, the person may need to follow the landlord's complaints process and may be signposted to the Housing Ombudsman where appropriate.

12. Anonymous complaints

Phoenix Support will consider anonymous complaints as far as possible. Anonymous complaints will be recorded, reviewed and investigated where there is enough information to do so.

Where an anonymous complaint raises safeguarding, safety, abuse, neglect, criminal, regulatory or serious service concerns, Phoenix Support will escalate and investigate appropriately.

13. Third-party complaints, consent and confidentiality

Phoenix Support accepts complaints from representatives, family members, advocates and professionals.

Where a complaint is made by someone else on behalf of a person using the service, Phoenix Support will consider:

- whether the person has consented;
- whether the person has capacity to consent;
- whether the representative has legal authority;
- whether sharing information is necessary and lawful;
- whether there are safeguarding, best interests or public interest reasons to act.

Phoenix Support will respect confidentiality and data protection. Personal information will only be shared where lawful and necessary.

14. Complaints involving staff conduct

Where a complaint involves staff conduct, Phoenix Support will investigate the complaint fairly and confidentially. Depending on the circumstances, action may include:

- informal management advice;
- supervision;
- retraining;
- competency review;
- rota changes;
- disciplinary investigation;
- safeguarding referral;
- police referral;
- referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service or professional body where required.

Staff will be treated fairly and given an opportunity to respond where appropriate. This does not override Phoenix Support's duty to act immediately to protect people from harm.

15. Complaints involving safeguarding, abuse or neglect

If a complaint suggests abuse, neglect, exploitation, self-neglect, organisational abuse, improper treatment, unsafe care or risk of harm, Phoenix Support will follow the Safeguarding Policy and local safeguarding procedures.

The Director, Registered Manager or Nominated Individual must be informed of serious safeguarding-related complaints. Phoenix Support will contact Kent County Council safeguarding, police, CQC, commissioners or other agencies where required.

The complaint process may continue, but safeguarding action must take priority.

16. Duty of Candour

Where a complaint relates to an incident that may meet the Duty of Candour threshold, Phoenix Support will follow Duty of Candour requirements. This includes:

- acting in an open and transparent way;
- telling the relevant person what has happened as soon as reasonably practicable;
- providing a truthful account of known facts;
- giving an apology;
- explaining what further enquiries will take place;
- providing reasonable support;
- keeping a written record.

Duty of Candour may apply alongside the complaints process, safeguarding process, incident process and CQC notification process.

17. Putting things right

Where Phoenix Support has made a mistake or fallen short, actions may include:

- apology;
- explanation;
- urgent corrective action;
- change to care plan or risk assessment;
- additional staff guidance;
- staff supervision, training or competency checks;
- rota or communication changes;
- medication process review;
- incident review or Opportunity to Learn review;
- referral to safeguarding or other professionals;

- review of policy or procedure;
- financial remedy where appropriate and agreed at Director level.

Any remedy should be proportionate to the impact on the person.

18. Records and reporting

Phoenix Support will keep a record of complaints, outcomes and actions taken. Records will be kept securely and in line with data protection requirements.

Complaint records may include:

- the complaint or concern;
- correspondence;
- investigation notes;
- evidence reviewed;
- safeguarding or incident links;
- response letters;
- actions and learning;
- outcome and closure record.

Phoenix Support will provide CQC with a summary of complaints, responses and related information within the required timescale if requested by CQC.

19. Learning and governance

Complaints, compliments and comments will be reviewed to identify themes, trends and learning.

Phoenix Support may consider:

- missed or late calls;
- staff continuity;
- communication with service users or families;
- medication concerns;
- documentation quality;
- staff conduct;
- safeguarding themes;
- rota or scheduling issues;
- staff training needs;
- quality review feedback;
- recurring concerns linked to a person, staff member, team, location or system.

Learning may be shared through supervision, team communication, training, policy updates, audits, Opportunity to Learn reviews, management meetings and service improvement actions.

20. Compliments and comments

Phoenix Support values compliments and positive feedback. Compliments will be recorded and shared with relevant staff or teams where appropriate.

Comments and suggestions will be reviewed and used to improve the service where possible.

21. Unreasonable or unacceptable behaviour

Phoenix Support understands that people may feel upset, angry or distressed when making a complaint. Staff will remain respectful and supportive.

However, Phoenix Support will not tolerate behaviour that is abusive, threatening, discriminatory, violent, harassing or places staff or others at risk.

Where behaviour becomes unacceptable, Phoenix Support may agree reasonable communication boundaries. This will be done carefully and will not prevent a person from making a complaint or receiving safe care.

Any restrictions must be proportionate, recorded and reviewed by a senior manager.

22. Linked policies and documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Statement of Purpose;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- Duty of Candour arrangements;
- Accident and Incident Reporting procedures;
- Opportunity to Learn process;
- Management of Medicines Policy;
- PRN Medication Policy;
- Accessible Information Standard Policy;
- Data Protection / GDPR Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Grievance Procedure;
- Disciplinary Procedure;
- Lone Working Policy;
- Violence and Aggression at Work Policy;
- Workplace Trauma Policy;
- Emergency and Business Continuity Policy and Plan.

23. Review and version control

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if there is a significant complaint, safeguarding event, regulatory change, CQC feedback, Ombudsman finding, serious incident or change to Phoenix Support's service model.

Version	Date	Summary of change	Owner	Approved by
V1 Final	May 2026	New Phoenix Support care-provider complaints, compliments and comments policy	Brendan O'Shea	Brendan O'Shea