

# THE BIG LiFE GROUP



**MAKING A COMPLAINT POLICY**

# Making a Complaint Policy

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| Policy Name        | Making a Complaint |
| Document Reference | BLG396             |
| Version Number     | 1                  |
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## 1. Aim of the policy

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The Big Life Group is committed to providing quality services, support and facilities. We encourage feedback to help us continually improve what we do.

We welcome positive comments as well as complaints. We will constructively respond to complaints and be open when things go wrong. We will also let you know about the improvements we have made as a result of your feedback.

## 2. Who can make a complaint?

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Anyone receiving, or who has received care or services from The Big Life Group. Anyone affected by our actions or decisions. If you cannot complain yourself, someone else (such as a carer, relative, or close friend) may complain on your behalf, but we may need your permission to share information with them.

## 3. Time limit for making a complaint

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Normally complaints should be made within twelve months of the event or within twelve months of the complainant becoming aware of a cause to complain. Exceptions to this rule may be made by the Complaint Handler considering reasons for the delay and the practicability of investigating the matter.

## 4. How to make a complaint

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Complaints can be made verbally, in writing, by telephone or by email. If you would like to make a complaint, whenever possible, speak directly to someone involved, like a staff member or volunteer.

If you feel uncomfortable approaching a staff member directly, you can contact the service directly. Contact details for all services can be found at the bottom of our Contact Us section on our website ([www.thebiglifegroup.com](http://www.thebiglifegroup.com)).

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You can submit a formal complaint using the form at the end of this document.

We can assist you to make a complaint by transcribing your complaint or providing you with someone to support you to make a complaint. There are also independent organisations who can assist you – please ask the service for details.

Complaints regarding a partner service will be referred to their complaint's procedure and we will make sure you know how to access their complaints process

We reserve the right to refuse to accept a complaint where the complaint is clearly vexatious, malicious or motivated by racist, sexist, homophobic or other discriminatory attitudes or where the complainant threatens or abuses Big Life staff. The decision as to whether a complaint is vexatious will be taken by the Complaint Handler in consultation with the appropriate director.

## **5. Complaints procedure**

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We are committed to providing ongoing communication throughout the complaints process. We will ensure that you are not treated differently or retaliated against because of making a complaint.

### **5.1 Informal Stage**

Informal complaints can be defined as issues that are resolved promptly to the complainant's satisfaction without the need for a formal investigation into what has happened. Both staff and volunteers are trained to deal with less serious matters and find solutions to problems.

The matter will go no further unless the complainant is still dissatisfied, then the formal stage will begin.

### **5.2 Formal stage**

We will appoint a suitably trained manager or team leader to investigate your complaint (the Complaint Handler). In some instances, a formal complaint may be investigated by a Complaint Handler from outside of the service.

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The Complaint Handler will acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing within 3 working days for NHS commissioned services, or 7 working days for all other services. The acknowledgement will include the following information:

- Name and contact information of the Complaint Handler, who will serve as your main contact throughout the process.
- The date by which we will aim to resolve your complaint. Our policy is to resolve formal complaints within 35-working-days from the date we receive your complaint.
- An offer to discuss the complaint process and timescales; as well as your expectations and desired outcome.
- If your complaint was made verbally, a copy of the verbal statement will be included. You should advise the Complaint Handler if you do not feel this accurately represents your complaint.
- Details of the independent advocacy services available in your locality.
- What your preferred method of contact is and if any adaptations are required (such as an interpreter).

If the investigation requires more than 35-working-days to complete, the Complaint Handler will contact you before the 28th day following the date of your complaint to inform you of the reasons for the delay and to provide a revised timeline.

Upon conclusion of the complaint investigation, a complaint outcome letter will be shared with you. The complaint outcome letter will include the following information:

- An explanation of how the complaint has been investigated.
- An apology if appropriate.
- A response to each issue raised based on facts.
- The conclusion of the complaint including whether the complaint is upheld in full or in part.
- An action plan (including timescales) of any action we plan to take in response to the findings of the investigation.

Actions may include:

- Specific improvements to the service.
- Bringing people together to mediate the dispute.
- Recommendations on staff training.

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If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you will be signposted to the relevant external organisation who is responsible for reviewing complaints for that service. This information will also be included in the complaint outcome letter.

## **6. Withdrawing a complaint**

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If at any time during the complaint process you, or your representative, decide to withdraw the complaint this request can be made either verbally or in writing. The withdrawal of a complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the Complaint Handler.

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# The Big Life Group Complaint Form

The Big Life Group is committed to providing quality services and welcomes feedback from people using the range of available services. Any complaints you make will be given serious attention and appropriate action will be taken. Please note, that this complaint will be kept on our secure IT systems for a period of 10 years.

|                                                                                                                                                                        |       |  |       |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--|-------|--|
| Name                                                                                                                                                                   |       |  |       |  |
| Email                                                                                                                                                                  |       |  |       |  |
| Phone number                                                                                                                                                           |       |  |       |  |
| Preferred method of contact (please tick)                                                                                                                              | Email |  | Phone |  |
| Date                                                                                                                                                                   |       |  |       |  |
| <b>Nature of complaint</b><br><p><i>(please explain in detail – use a separate sheet if necessary)</i></p>                                                             |       |  |       |  |
| <b>Desired outcome:</b><br><p><i>(please explain in detail the desired outcome you would like in response to the complaint– use a separate sheet if necessary)</i></p> |       |  |       |  |

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