



Combe Home Care Ltd

Complaints (V8.0.0)

Date Published: 13/08/2026 | **Date Reviewed:** 13/08/2026 | **Next Review Date:** 13/08/2027

Person responsible for updating this policy: Kerry Turton

Approved By Kerry Turton **Date** 28/09/2026

Policy Statement

Regulation 16: Receiving and Acting on Complaints.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Accessible Information and Communication.
- Adult Safeguarding.
- Consent.
- Data Protection (UK GDPR).
- Dignity and Respect.
- Duty of Candour.
- Good Governance and Quality Management.
- Grievance.
- Whistleblowing.

This Combe Home Care Ltd policy is intended to comply with Regulation 16: Receiving and acting on complaints.

Combe Home Care Ltd accepts the rights of the service users, their families and advocates to make complaints and to register comments and concerns about the services received. It further accepts that they should find it easy to do so. Every service users and their families are provided with clear information on how to make a complaint and our staff are competent to always support individuals with making a complaint.

It welcomes complaints as opportunities to learn, adapt, improve, and provide better services.

Combe Home Care Ltd will comply with legislation, national guidelines, regulations and best practice when managing complaints and suggestions. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, We will ensure our processes are fair and transparent and do not discriminate directly or indirectly, against those with protected characteristics.

All records are kept, stored and shared in accordance with Combe Home Care Ltd 's Data Protection policy, which aligns with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments by a service users or their relatives, carers, and advocates are taken seriously. It is not designed to apportion blame, consider the possibility of negligence, or provide compensation. It is not part of the company's Disciplinary Policy or Grievance Process.

Combe Home Care Ltd believes that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints leads to an aggravation of problems, service users dissatisfaction, and possible litigation. Combe Home Care Ltd supports the idea that most complaints if dealt with early, openly, and honestly, can be sorted at a local level between just the complainant and Combe Home Care Ltd. The complaints procedure is made available to the service users and families in their Service Users guide. A copy is always kept in their Care and Support plan in their homes and available in a format that can be understood.

ADASS has published a Good Practice Guide on Handling Complaints concerning Adults and Children in Social Care Settings. They have identified the following five principles:

- Ensure that the complaints process is accessible.
- Ensure that the complaints process is straightforward for a service users and their representatives.
- Ensure that an appropriate system is in place to keep a service users informed throughout the complaints process.
- Ensure that the complaints process is resolution-focused.
- Ensure that quality assurance processes are in place to enable organisational learning and service improvement from complaints and customer feedback.

Any complaints made by staff will be signposted to the Grievance policy if the complaint relates to them as an individual, or via the Whistleblowing policy where a protected disclosure is made.

Aim of the Complaints Procedure

We aim to ensure that the complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented and that every service users can feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly. Specifically, we aim to ensure that:

- Every service users, their carers, and their representatives are aware of how to complain and that Combe Home Care Ltd provides easy-to-use opportunities for them to register their complaints.
- A named person will be responsible for the administration of the procedure.
- We will acknowledge a complaint in 3 working days.
- All complaints are investigated within 14 days of being made.
- All complaints are responded to in writing within 28 days of being made.
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly, and sensitively, with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to both the service users and staff.

Our Duty of Candour supports openness and honesty. Candour works only when it is part of a broader commitment to safety, listening, and learning, and to an organisational commitment to continual improvement.

When things go wrong in health or social care settings, the service users and families will want to know at least these three things:

- To be honestly told what happened.
- What can be done to deal with any harm caused?
- To understand what will be done to prevent a recurrence for someone else.

Please refer to the separate Duty of Candour policy.

Children's Services

Combe Home Care Ltd recognises the rights of children to make complaints and representations and to have their views considered within a clear procedure as defined by law.

We aim:

- To ensure that the children and young people our service comes into contact with are aware of how to make a complaint.
- To ensure all children, young people and adults facing problems or challenges who wish to make a complaint are well supported to do so.
- To offer advocacy service where appropriate.

- To provide a sensitive and customer-focused service for complaints and representations by offering help and advice to all complainants, members of the public and other interested parties.

How to Raise a Complaint

The person raising the complaint should include the following details where relevant or possible. However, once the complaint is raised, further information can be collected from the complainant as required by the person carrying out the investigation.

We have a complaints template available if requested.

Personal Details

- Their full name.
- Address and contact details (phone/email).
- If they are complaining on behalf of someone else:
 - Their name and details.
 - Their relationship to them.
- Confirmation of consent (if appropriate).

Details of the Care Service

- Name of the domiciliary care provider/agency.
- Location or branch (if relevant).
- Names of care workers or staff involved (if known).

Date(s) and Time(s)

- When the incident(s) happened.
- Whether it was a one-off or an ongoing issue.

Description of the Complaint - Provide a clear, factual account, keep this chronological and specific, including:

- What happened.
- Where it happened (e. g., At home, during a visit).
- Who was involved.
- What was said or done.
- Any relevant background information.

Impact of the Issue- Explain how the problem affected the individual:

- Physical impact (e. g., Injury, missed medication).
- Emotional impact (e. g., Distress, anxiety).
- Practical consequences (e. g., Missed visits, unmet care needs).

Evidence (if available)

- Care records or logs.
- Photos.
- Emails or messages.
- Witness statements.

Actions Already Taken

- Whether it has been raised before.
- Who they spoke to (manager, care coordinator, etc.)
- Any responses or outcomes received.

Desired Outcome - Clearly stating what they would like to happen, for example:

- Apology.
- Explanation.
- Staff member training or disciplinary action.
- Change of Care and Support staff member.
- Refund or compensation (if applicable).
- Service improvement.

Safeguarding Concerns (if relevant) -If the complaint involves:

- Abuse or neglect.
- Risk of harm.

This should be clearly highlighted, as it may require urgent safeguarding action and referral to the Local Authority (LA).

Responsibilities

KERRY TURTON is responsible for following through with complaints. However, there may be a specific post with responsibility for complaints (For Combe Home Care Ltd this is Kerry Turton Manager). Communication between this post and KERRY TURTON should be clear and transparent so that KERRY TURTON can demonstrate evidence of compliance.

If the complaint is concerning KERRY TURTON then another manager or director on the senior management team will handle the complaint.

When the complaint concerns the registered manager who is also the nominated individual another manager or director from the senior management team will address it. Tanya Pincombe,
tanya.pincombe@combehomecare.com

Complaints From A Representative

If the service users directly affected does not want to complain themselves, they can ask someone else to make the complaint on their behalf and represent them throughout the process.

A representative can be anyone such as:

- A family member.
- A friend.
- An advocate.
- A legal representative.

There is no restriction on who may act as a representative and this list is not exhaustive.

Combe Home Care Ltd will support them by signposting the service users to an advocate if they do not have any other representation and are not happy to raise the complaint themselves.

Combe Home Care Ltd can only accept complaints from a representative In certain situations. These are;

- Where it is known that the service users has consented, either verbally or in writing (and this includes the willingness for us to share personal information with the representative).
- Where the service users cannot complain unaided and cannot give consent because they lack capacity in line with the The Mental Capacity Act 2005, and the representative is acting in the best interest of the service users.

If the service users does not consent to us discussing the complaint with their representative then we take this into account. We will explain to the person making the complaint that only the issues that directly affect them can be investigated. If we do not have consent to share personal information about the service users we will not be able to investigate any matters relating to the service users or share personal information about the service users which may leave some of their concerns unanswered.

If we receive a complaint where the service users directly affected does not have the capacity to consent to the complaint being made on their behalf, we first determine if the person making the complaint on their behalf has a legitimate interest in the person's welfare and that there is no conflict of interest. We also need to determine if the person making the complaint has a right of access to the personal information of the service users directly affected. E.g. Are they an attorney with authority to manage the property and affairs of the individual or are they a person appointed by the Courts to make decisions about such matters.

Complaints Procedure

Verbal Complaints

- The service users can initially talk to their carer or care team, as many issues can be rectified quickly by raising the matter directly with the carers/care team.
- Staff must make a record of verbal concerns, including any verbal concerns about themselves and report them to their KERRY TURTON.
- If the matter is more serious or about an individual or individuals in the care team, then contact the office and report the complaint to the KERRY TURTON or senior person in charge.
- If the complaint concerns the KERRY TURTON or Nominated Individual, then speak to the senior manager, company director, or independent designated person – contact details are listed at the end of this policy.
- Combe Home Care Ltd accepts that all verbal complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, must be taken seriously.
- Front-line Care and Support staff who receive a verbal complaint are expected to seek to solve the problem immediately.
- If they cannot solve the problem immediately, they should offer to get their line manager to deal with the problem.
- Staff are expected to remain polite, courteous, sympathetic, and professional to the complainant. They are taught that there is nothing to be gained by adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- At all times in responding to the complaint, staff are encouraged to remain calm and respectful.
- Staff should not make excuses or blame other staff.
- After discussing the problem, KERRY TURTON or staff member dealing with the complaint will suggest a means of resolving it.
- If this course of action is acceptable, the staff member should clarify the agreement with the complainant and agree on a way in which the results of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant (i. e. Through another meeting or by letter).
- If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant, the staff member or manager will ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing to KERRY TURTON.
- The complainant should be given a copy of the Combe Home Care Ltd complaints procedure if they do not already have one.
- Details of all verbal and written complaints must be recorded in the complaints book, the service users records and the home records.

Serious or Written Complaints Procedure

Preliminary steps:

- When we receive a written complaint, it is passed to the designated lead manager, Kerry Turton Manager, who records it in the complaints book and sends an acknowledgement letter within 3 working days to the complainant.
- The manager includes either a copy of this policy or details of the organisation's procedure for the complainant in this letter.
- The designated lead is the named person who deals with the complaint throughout the process.
- If necessary, further details are obtained from the complainant. If the complaint is not made by the service users but on behalf of the service users, the consent of the service users, preferably in writing, must be obtained from the complainant where required.
- If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice could be sought from a legal advisor. If legal action is taken at this stage, any investigation by Combe Home Care Ltd under the complaints procedure ceases immediately.

Investigation of the complaint by Combe Home Care Ltd:

- Immediately on receipt of the complaint, Kerry Turton Manager will start an investigation and, within 14 days, should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.
- If the issues are too complex for the investigation to be completed within 28 days, the complainant will be informed of any delays.
- Where the complaint cannot be resolved between the parties, an arbitration service will be used.
- This service and its findings will be final to both parties. The cost of this will be borne by Combe Home Care Ltd.

Meeting:

- If a meeting is arranged, the complainant will be advised that they may, if so desired, bring a friend, relative, or a representative, such as an advocate.
- At the meeting, a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation will be given, in addition to an apology, if deemed appropriate (an apology is not necessarily an admission of liability).
- Such a meeting allows the management to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

Follow-up action:

- After the meeting or if the complainant does not want a meeting, a written account of the investigation will be sent to the complainant.
- If the complainant is not happy with the response they receive or if they have not received an answer within a reasonable time, they can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- The Ombudsman believes that up to 12 weeks is a reasonable time for a council or care provider to look at a complaint and reply to the complainant.
- The outcomes of the investigation and the meeting are recorded in the complaints book and any shortcomings in Combe Home Care Ltd procedures will be identified and acted upon.
- Combe Home Care Ltd management formally reviews all complaints at least every six months as part of its quality monitoring and improvement procedures to identify the lessons learned.

All records are kept, stored and shared in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Vexatious Complainers

Combe Home Care Ltd takes seriously any comments or complaints regarding its service. However, there may be occasions where a service user can be treated as 'vexatious complainers' due to the inability of Combe Home Care Ltd to meet the outcomes of the complaints, which are never resolved. Vexatious complainers need to be dealt with by the arbitration service so that the repeated investigations become less of a burden on Combe Home Care Ltd, its staff, and any other service users impacted.

Accessibility

Combe Home Care Ltd Policies and procedures are available in accessible formats, well publicised, readily available and accessible to each service users, their families, significant others, visitors, staff and others working at the service.

The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

Investigate all complaints about adult care services, care provided by a council or care arranged directly with a care provider by:

- Someone paying with their own or family money.
- Someone using money provided by a council, via direct payment for example.

There is a step-by-step process for making an online complaint on the LGSCO website or a phone number to contact them.

A complaint should be made within 12 months of the problem. If left any longer the Ombudsman may not be able to help.

The LGSCO works to promote high-quality services for all people who use adult social care services. This is particularly the case where when investigating a complaint the LGSCO detect service failures by a care provider that may affect its registration status. An information-sharing agreement and memorandum of understanding set out how information is shared.

Raising a concern with the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Care Quality Commission (CQC) does not handle complaints about service providers. They cannot make these complaints for the complainant or take them up on their behalf. This may seem confusing, but it is because Care Quality Commission (CQC) lacks the legal powers to investigate or resolve these issues. Care Quality Commission (CQC) advises that the provider's complaints procedure should be followed or that one should contact the Local Authority (LA).

However, the service users /members of the public and staff can provide feedback about their experience with the care service. Care Quality Commission (CQC) will use this intelligence alongside other forms of evidence gathering to determine if they need to take action against the provider.

If a crime has been committed or someone is in danger, the police must be contacted immediately.

Local Authority-funded Service Users

Any service users part or wholly funded by Devon County Council can complain directly to the complaints manager (adults) who are employed directly via [23, LaName].

Quality Management

As an organisation, Combe Home Care Ltd prioritise delivering the highest-quality service to every service users. Our approach is based on the belief that, regardless of how good our current services are, there is always room for improvement. We are dedicated to continuous improvement and maintain a formal quality management system that provides a framework for assessing and improving our performance, including learning from complaints.

Regularly monitoring and evaluating our service through audits and feedback from the service users and other stakeholders is vital for continuous improvement. Data collected from complaints will be analysed for patterns and themes to develop improvement plans that ensure every service users is safe and receives the highest-quality care.

The complainant will receive written notification of the learning outcomes arising from their complaint. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the result, they will be provided with information about the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, where they can pursue their complaint further. If the Local Authority (LA) funds the person who uses the service, the complainant can also be referred to the complaints manager for the Local Authority (LA).

Relevant Contacts

Written Complaints

SHOULD BE MADE TO

Kerry Turton

Manager

Units 5 & 10 The Candar

Ilfracombe

Devon

EX34 9DS

kerry.turton@combehomecare.com

Socially funded service users can also make a complaint via Care Direct or their social worker.

Care Direct number is 0345 155 1007

Or contact

The Care Quality Commission

Citygate

Gallowgate

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE1 4PA

03000 616161

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (NHS -funded Service User).

Millbank Tower.

Millbank.

London, SW1P 4QP.

Tel. 0345 015 4033.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

PO Box 4771.

Coventry.

CV4 0EH.

Advice Line Tel: 0300 061 0614[for complainants].

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) cannot get involved in individual complaints about providers but is happy to receive information about services at any time.

To raise concerns, contact:

The Care Quality Commission.

Citygate.

Gallowgate.

Complaints (V8.0.0)

Newcastle upon Tyne.
NE1 4PA.
Tel. 03000 616161.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) will take on board details of concerns and respond appropriately and proportionately to the information provided.

Training Statement

All staff, during induction, are made aware of the organisation's policies and procedures, all of which are used for training updates. All policies and procedures are reviewed and amended where necessary and staff are made aware of any changes. Observations are undertaken to check skills and competencies. Various methods of training are used including one to one, online, workbook, group meetings, individual supervision and external courses are sourced as required.

Related Policies

- Accessible Information And Communication (Including Statement) (Domiciliary)
- Adult Safeguarding (Domiciliary)
- Consent (Domiciliary)
- Dignity And Respect (Domiciliary)
- Duty Of Candour (Domiciliary)
- Good Governance and Quality Management (Domiciliary)

Related Guidance

- [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: Annual Review of Complaints](#)
- [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: How to Complain](#)
- [Raising a concern with CQC](#)

Policy Legal Statement

This policy is Copyright © W&P Assessment & Training Centre Ltd. 2024 and is only licensed for use with a current W&P Portal Contract. If you have a current contract, it can be accessed in your online account. Use of this policy without a current W&P Portal Contract is strictly prohibited.