

COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time

Description of Policy / What is it for?	YMCA Bournemouth aims to provide a good standard of services for all its clients, customers and others with whom it may come into contact. Sometimes things are not up to this standard, so this policy allows for individuals to let the YMCA know issues which arise, and also to compliment when things are going well.
Purpose of policy / Objectives	The policy, in compliance with the Equality Act 2010, aims to provide a consistent and positive approach to complaints handling and to receiving compliments and to use the experience as an aid to improve service delivery. This will help the Association to deliver satisfaction to clients or members of the community and for others who may complain.
Scope	This policy covers all YMCA Bournemouth employees, workers, contractors, trustees, students and volunteers
Other relevant approved documents	• Grievance procedures • Whistleblowing policy • Equal opportunities and diversity policy • Confidentiality policy • Social Media Policy • Safeguarding Policy
Date of Issue/Re-Issue	September 2025
First/Review date	September 2027
Prepared by	Mark Inkpen Joint Chief Operating Officer
Monitoring and evaluation	YMCA Bournemouth will monitor the implementation of this policy through supervision of staff to ensure its effectiveness. Senior Managers will ensure legislative adherence.
Approved by	COO
Authorised by	COO

Version Control (To be completed by the Policy Author)

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1.	September 2004	Linda Voysey	Approved	

Statement of intent

YMCA Bournemouth strives for high standards in everything that it does, and we believe that all of our customers and clients deserve the best service possible and are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and expectations. We welcome suggestions on how we can improve and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns as feedback is invaluable in helping us to evaluate and improve our work.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

YMCA Bournemouth is committed to ensuring that all customers/clients have equal access to the compliments and complaints processes, irrespective of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, race or national origin, or if pregnant. In the operation and review of this policy, the organisation will seek to remove any barriers or obstacles, so that everyone can exercise their right to give feedback about the services they receive.

We will ensure, where residents struggle with literacy, that a member of staff will sit down with them and go through the complaint procedure, outcome letter and assist them with any response.

Compliments policy

The purpose of the Compliments policy is to ensure that compliments received from customers, service users, staff, workers, contractors, students, volunteers and partner bodies are recorded, acknowledged and conveyed to the individuals being thanked and other staff. Compliments will be regularly analysed so that areas for improvement and potential good practice can be identified and used to promote good practice.

What is a compliment?

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction with a service provided by an individual, a team or YMCA Bournemouth as a whole. The compliment could be from anyone who engages a service or is in receipt of a service from YMCA Bournemouth.

How can a compliment be given?

- In person at one of our Centres
- By phone
- By email to enquiries@ymcabournemouth.org.uk
- In writing via letter, customer feedback forms, suggestion boxes etc

The compliment will be passed on to the relevant member of staff and their line manager within 3 working days.

Complaints policy

YMCA Bournemouth views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint, ideally before an issue becomes worse.

A complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of actions by the organisation/landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf affecting an individual or group of clients/customers”.

A Service Request is where a customer/client is unhappy about a situation that they wish to have rectified. Our frontline staff and Managers are empowered to resolve issues (where appropriate) directly and informally with the complainant. Clients will also be encouraged to register any concerns about the service they receive at key working sessions. A complaint should be initiated when the customer raises dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the service request is still being dealt with and this should not stop efforts to resolve the service request.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair, clear and easy to use complaints procedure for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To ensure all staff are aware of what to do when a complaint is received
- To ensure that all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints, where possible, are resolved and relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do and maintain our services and relationship with our residents, and the public.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use YMCA Bournemouth's Grievance policies. Complaints involving abuse or neglect will be dealt with immediately under our Safeguarding Policy but may be dealt with under this Policy where the Organisation's actions or responses are called into question.

When should you complain?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of YMCA Bournemouth.

If you are not happy with something, tell us. You should complain if you feel we have:

- Not met a commitment that we made to you.
- Failed to provide a service or an acceptable standard.
- Treated you unfairly or impolitely.
- Not done something we said we would do.
- Done something badly or that we should not have done.

Who can complain?

Anyone who has a legitimate interest in YMCA Bournemouth can complain. You may wish to have a friend, relative or support worker help you make your complaint. We are happy to take complaints from our residents, health and fitness users, families & young people we work with as well as community users and any partner agencies or neighbours. All complaints and service requests will be recorded on the YMCA Bournemouth online staff portal to be monitored and reviewed.

Exclusions

YMCA Bournemouth will accept a complaint and look into it unless there is a valid reason not to do so. The circumstances when a complaint may not be considered are:

- The issue is, or has been, subject to legal proceedings.
- A liability issue that is subject to an insurance claim.
- The complaint has not been raised within a reasonable time frame. I.e. The issue took place more than 12 months ago. If it is a recurring issue, older reports will however be taken into account for background information.
- The complaint has been considered already.
- The complaint is being pursued in an unreasonable manner, which despite efforts to resolve by staff and Senior Management is not able to move forward.

Each complaint will be fairly considered on its own merits and if one of the circumstances above is relevant, a detailed explanation will be given to the person as to why this is the case. A YMCA resident will be able to challenge this decision, via the Housing Ombudsman, who will instruct further action if necessary.

How do I complain?

You can make a complaint in whatever way is best for you, for example:

- In person
- By phone
- Via our website
- In writing – letter, customer feedback forms
- By email to the manager or enquiries@ymcabournemouth.org.uk which will then be directed to the appropriate manager.

Customer Survey feedback flagging dissatisfaction is not defined as a complaint but will be automatically sent through to the HR team who will inform the person completing the survey how to pursue a complaint if they wanted to. This will then be passed on to the appropriate manager as they are received to see if a complaint is to be made.

If a complaint is made via social media channels, this should be acknowledged asap online and followed up with the person making the complaint and they should be asked to put in their complaint using one of the means listed above and move off of social media to respond, in a non-public way to maintain confidentiality and privacy.

If you need help to write or explain your complaint, YMCA Bournemouth are committed to make reasonable adjustments to our procedures to ensure you can do so. Please speak to a member of staff who will be able to help you to make your complaint. We will also consider you appointing a representative to aid you in making your complaint and liaising with the person dealing with it.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection/GDPR requirements.

Dealing with your complaint

The member of staff (The Complaints Officer) dealing with your complaint will need to know your name and address and how they can contact you to follow up (except in the case of an anonymous complaint).

We will:

- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days
- Listen to you and, if appropriate try to put right whatever it is that you are not happy about
- Make sure we sort out your complaint promptly, politely, sensitively and fairly.
- Respond within the timescales set out in our complaint's procedure.
- Keep you informed if we need to take longer to sort out your complaint.
- Tell you who to contact should you wish to appeal and move to the next stage of the complaint's procedure.

When communicating, the YMCA will use plain language that is appropriate to the person who has a complaint. The Complaints Officer shall address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. At the completion of each stage of the complaints process we will write to the complainant advising them of the following:

- the complaint stage
- the outcome of the complaint
- the reasons for any decisions made
- the details of any remedy offered to put things right
- details of any outstanding actions
- details of how to escalate the matter if dissatisfied.

Where something has gone wrong YMCA Bournemouth will acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:

- Apologising;
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
- Taking action if there has been delay;
- Reconsidering or changing a decision;
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- Providing a financial remedy;
- Changing policies, procedures or practices.

From time to time, YMCAB may receive complaints that are numerous and/or vexatious in nature, or the complainant acts unreasonably when pursuing their complaint. YMCAB staff will hold a meeting with the complainant to set out clearly the actions they will take and the standards of behaviour that they can reasonably expect from the complainant. A record will be made of the meeting and of all decisions made. YMCAB may offer mediation or in severe cases refuse to investigate and suggest escalation directly to an Ombudsman.

Responsibilities

The board of trustees

The Board will receive quarterly reports on compliments and complaints in order that it can gain assurance about the operation of this policy and have an insight into customer views about how they are experiencing service delivery.

Compliments/Complaints received direct to Board Members will be relayed, in the first instance, to the CEO who will pass to the HR team and relevant managers to look into.

Staff, volunteers and contractors

All staff, including volunteers and contractors, will behave courteously when dealing with customers/clients. Staff will also be sensitive to client/customers' needs, and individual situations, and assist whenever required.

All staff, including volunteers and contractors, will need to be familiar with and comply with the Compliments and complaints policy and procedure. Contractors are provided with this as part of RAMS they receive prior to being engaged.

Housing staff will record details of feedback they receive in client case notes, and this will be reviewed at Team Meetings. All complaints will be inputted onto the YMCA portal as a record.

The YMCA promotes a positive culture regarding complaints and all staff have mandatory induction training to understand the Policy & Procedure. Complaint handling staff are empowered, where appropriate, to resolve matters directly and speedily with the complainant.

Heads of department / Managers

Each department will appoint a person responsible for handling all complaints in line with this policy at stage 1; this person will be referred to as the Complaints Officer. There will be support for the Complaints Officer from the Executive team to ensure consistency of service in the event of absence. The Complaints Officer will be responsible for administering, investigating and recording complaints, ensuring they assess, resolve, and respond to complaints. They will ensure that complaints are resolved within the protocols and timescales outlined in this policy. **The Complaints Officer must log the complaint on Staff portal under Service Feedback tab.**

Reflective practice is encouraged within teams to include an opportunity to learn from compliments and complaints to improve service delivery and outcomes.

Executive management

A member of the Executive team will deal with complaints at stage 2 and also monitor complaint outcome letters for quality working with departmental colleagues to share good practice or improve communications, as needed.

The COO's will also ensure that reports of complaint volumes, types etc are produced for board review and seek to get Board sign off for and publish the annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code on the YMCA's website.

They will also ensure the most recent copy of the Compliments and Complaints policy is published on the website.

Complaints procedure

We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff/volunteer. If this does not have the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.

We aim to bring all concerns to a satisfactory conclusion for all the parties involved.

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure.

Informal concerns

In the first instance, any concerns should be raised informally with a member of staff or person in charge of the service/department and the issues ideally dealt with in this way. Service requests will be recorded as such.

Stage 1 (Formal)

If informal discussion does not result in a satisfactory outcome, or if the situation is considered to be of a more serious nature, or if the problem is a recurrent one, the concern/complaint should be put in writing to the person in charge of the service/department. We will acknowledge your concern/complaint within 5 working days and a decision will usually be made within 10 working days of acknowledgement (if it is going to take longer than this due to complexity, contact will be made with the person complaining to explain why this is the case and when we will be able to respond). Both parties are entitled to ask for another person to be present at any meetings. An agreed written record of the discussion is made. Most concerns/complaints should be resolved informally or at Stage 1. Individuals will be informed that if they are not satisfied with the response to their complaint, they may appeal to a member of the Executive Management Team within 10 working days and progress to stage 2 – details will be always provided.

Stage 2 (Formal appeal)

If you are not satisfied with the way your complaint has been handled in any way, you may request a meeting with a member of the YMCA's Executive Management Team to appeal. They will review the stage one investigation and will recommend that this action is upheld or implement changes to the stage one actions. Both parties are entitled to ask for another person to be present during a meeting. An agreed written record of the discussion is made. All parties present at the meeting should sign the record and receive a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. The meeting will be held within 10 working days of the complaint going to the Executive Management Team. They will acknowledge the appeal within 5 days of escalation to stage 2. A response will then be provided within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.

If the complaint is about the CEO then the matter will be discussed with two trustees from the Board of Directors. Contact can be made via the YMCA's HR department.

If the complaints procedure has been followed but you are still not happy with the outcome, you may want to take things further. You also have the right at any time to contact an appropriate independent body to discuss your complaint, although they will generally want you to follow the YMCA's procedure in the first instance.

Housing

Independent Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ
Tel: 0300 111 3000
Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Children's Services

Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate)
Tel: 0300 123 4666
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The Charity Commission

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/complain-about-charity.

Records

A record of concerns/complaints against all staff/volunteers of YMCA Bournemouth is kept, for the purpose of staff support & wellbeing. This log will include the employees name, the date, who the complaint came from, the circumstances of the concern/complaint and how the concern/complaint was managed. This will be done in accordance with the data protection Act, and GDPR regulations of 2018. An annual review will be completed by each Department Manager to see if there are any issues or trends from the complaints.

Within our Housing team we follow the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code and complete an annual self-assessment and Board review of this. This can be found on our website – <https://www.ymcabournemouth.org.uk/about/compliments-suggestions-and-complaints/>

Anonymous compliments and complaints

Compliments and complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

Complaints/Concern Form

This form is not only for formal complaints but to register issues that you feel we need to discuss.

This is a formal complaint ☐

This is a matter of concern ☐

This is a suggestion ☐

Name of project/department

Date of report

Name and address of person
With complaint/concern

Has the person with complaint/concern received a copy of the complaints procedure?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Date(s) and time(s) of circumstances leading to the complaint/concern

Date(s)

Time(s)

Brief outline of the nature of the concern/complaint/suggestion

Brief outline of the circumstances

Initial action taken by the person with complaint/concern (if applicable)

Action requested from person in charge

Availability for discussion Yes ☐ No ☐ Preferred Date/time

I wish to make a formal complaint and request that my complaint is acknowledged and investigated by the person in charge as soon as possible, and that I am informed of the outcome ☐

I wish to raise this as a matter of concern and request that the issue is acknowledged and investigated by the person in charge as soon as possible, and that I am informed of the outcome. ☐

Signed by person making the complaint

Date

Staff signature
(if completed by member of staff)

Date

Print name

YMCA Bournemouth Housing Complaints Form

Name of person making complaint:		Resident / Public / Other Service / Staff
Address:		
Name of person recording complaint:		Resident / Public / Other Service / Staff
Connection to person making the complaint:		

Complaint recorded:		
Date	Time	Location

Incident occurred:		
Date	Time	Location

Complaint is about:	
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[illegible]

Signed:

Action taken so far, if any:

What action do you feel should be taken:

Signed:

Date:

Compliment form

Date: / /

Location: _____

Your Name: _____

Your Contact details: _____

Would you like a reply: YES / NO (please delete as necessary).

Employee's name: _____

Subject Area: _____

Your Comments: _____



Thank you for your feedback