Title of Policy:	**Complaints**
Section:	**Operations**

Purpose

Complaints are an opportunity to improve the quality and efficiency of services Active 8 Support Services provides to its Young People. This policy encourages Young People to voice their concerns so that difficulties can be speedily resolved to the satisfaction of all. This policy will also be applicable to complaints from staff, the public or any relevant party.

Statement

Complaints from Young People whom We Support

Active 8 Support Services strives to achieve the very best outcomes for its Young People all the time. However, on occasion, things can go wrong, and as such, may be the subject of a complaint. If they do, we need to know about it so we can put it right, learn from our mistakes, and implement organisational, procedural or operational changes so as to reduce the potential for complaints in the future.

It is Active 8 Support Services commitment to:

- always take complaints seriously and investigate them fairly.
- deal with complaints according to this procedure unless they are relatively minor, that can be resolved immediately and informally
- treat complaints confidentially.
- never discriminate against anyone for making a complaint.
- ensuring that Young People know of the existence of this policy, and how to make a complaint if they wish to do so.

Complaints may be made directly by a Young Person, or they may be made on behalf of a Young Person if the Young Person is unable or unwilling to undertake the process alone.

Young people will be informed of how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner for advice and assistance about their rights and entitlements.

If a young person needs assistance from Help at Hand, they can access Help at Hand using the following resources:

Visit Help at Hand's website:
https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/

Email Help at Hand:
help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Freephone:
0800 528 0731

Young people can also make complaints via their placing authority or Ofsted if they choose.

Ofsted: 0300 123 4666

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Procedure and Guidance

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with regards to:

- The standard of service provided
- Action or lack of action taken
- Decision taken

Complaints may be made orally or in writing via letter or email. When the complaint is made orally, Active 8 Support Services' understanding of the problem will, where necessary (in that the complaint has not or cannot be resolved informally), be summarised in the letter of acknowledgement.

Our approach

Informal Complaints

All staff are instructed to take complaints seriously. Where complaints are made orally, staff are asked to try to resolve the problem immediately and informally. The more formal procedure outlined here will usually not be instigated where the subject of the complaint is relatively minor, such as a complaint that a Care and Support Worker arrived 5 minutes' late, or used an incorrect form of address, etc. In such cases, the recipient of the complaint will apologise unreservedly and express the wish that such events will not be repeated. In every case, the Young Person will be asked to confirm that they are happy with the response given. If not, then the matter must be treated as though it was a written complaint.

On occasion, a Young Person may make a complaint orally and directly to a Support Worker, or by phone to the office, on a more serious issue which cannot be dealt with informally. In such cases, the individual receiving the complaint will record the details of the complaint, on a form provided for this purpose, and advise Active 8 Support Services without delay. The essence of the complaint will be summarised in the subsequent letter of acknowledgement.

Formal Complaints

All written complaints, or complaints made orally which have not been satisfied or are of a more serious nature, will be regarded as formal complaints and recorded in Active 8 Support Services register of complaints.

All formal complaints will be handled by the appointed complaints manager, unless the complaint is about them, in which case it will be handled by the registered person.
No person who is the subject of a complaint takes any part in its consideration or investigation, except at the informal resolution stage if the registered person considers it appropriate.

Acknowledgement

The complaint will be acknowledged, in writing, within 7 days of receipt. The acknowledgement will outline the essence of the complaint, unless this has already been stated in writing by the Young Person.

Active 8 Support Services will outline the process to be undertaken, the likely duration of any investigation or consideration, and the name of the person who oversees the matter. Active 8 Support Services will always aim to act on formal complaints within twenty business days of the letter of acknowledgement.

On occasion, and in response to more serious matters, a longer initial period may be proposed. If subsequent events indicate a likely delay, then the complainant will be kept informed, given the reason for the delay and where possible, given an updated timeframe.

Investigation process

The complaint investigation process will commence following receipt of the complaint, and will include information gathering from meetings, interviews paperwork, etc.

Following this, a written response will outline the nature of the complaint, the matters given consideration by Active 8 Support Services, and its response. This will be sent within 10 days of the conclusion of the complaint investigation.

Once this has been sent, Active 8 Support Services will follow up directly with the Young Person offering a resolution meeting to offer support and establish whether they feel that the matter has been dealt with appropriately, and to their satisfaction. Active 8 Support Services will then write to the complainant outlining what has been discussed and agreed. If the Young Person remains dissatisfied, however, then further considerations may be given to help resolve any differences.

However, should Active 8 Support Services' ability to resolve the matter prove insufficient, then the Young Person may seek external advice, such as an approach to their accommodating authority. We will support any young person to do this if required.

Records

Active 8 Support Services will maintain records of all formal complaints, the action taken in response and the outcome of any investigation. The registered person will ensure that no young person is subject to any reprisal for making a complaint or representation.

A complete log of all complaints and the action taken will be available to OFSTED inspectors upon request.

Learning from our mistakes

Every formal complaint is an opportunity to improve. Active 8 Support Services will ensure that errors, mistakes or other omissions or failures are examined carefully so

as to understand what needs to be done to prevent the same or similar incidents in the future.

Complaint timeline (Young People)

Action	Expected Timeframe
Complaint acknowledged in writing	Five days
Complaint investigation to start	Immediately to five days (dependant on complaint severity)
Investigation process	Twenty business days
Formal outcome letter sent	Five business days
Meeting with young person to discuss outcome	Five business days
Meeting minutes identifying young persons Views and position following complaint	Five business days

Complaints about staff

Where a complaint is about the behaviour of a member of staff, and behaviour is found to be inappropriate, unprofessional or abusive (for example), then Active 8 Support Services' formal disciplinary procedure may run alongside the complaint process in parallel. Where appropriate, matters may also be referred to external bodies.

All Complaints (not young people in current support)

We take all complaints seriously and where possible strive to resolve them in a way satisfactory to all parties.

Acknowledgement

The complaint will be acknowledged, in writing, within five days of receipt. The acknowledgement will outline the essence of the complaint.

Active 8 Support Services will outline the process to be undertaken, the likely duration of any investigation or consideration, and the name of the person who oversees the matter. Active 8 Support Services will always aim to act on formal complaints within twenty business days of the letter of acknowledgement.

On occasion, and in response to more serious matters, a longer initial period may be proposed. If subsequent events indicate a likely delay, then the complainant will be

kept informed, given the reason for the delay and where possible, given an updated timeframe.

Investigation process

The complaint investigation process will commence following receipt of the complaint and will include information gathering from meetings, interviews paperwork, etc.

Following this a written response will outline the nature of the complaint, the matters given consideration by Active 8 Support Services, and its response. This will be sent within five business days of the conclusion of the complaint investigation.

Contractual Complaints

If a contractual complaint is received, it will be dealt with by the registered person. The complaint will be dealt with under this policy, or under a contractual complaints procedure written into a service contract. In this instance, the contract procedure will take precedence.

Records

Active 8 Support Services will maintain records of all formal complaints and details in relation to their outcome.

Learning from our mistakes

Every formal complaint is an opportunity to improve. Active 8 Support Services will ensure that errors, mistakes or other omissions or failures are examined carefully, so as to understand what needs to be done to prevent the same or similar incidents in the future.

Complaint timeline (not Young People in current support)

Action	Expected Timeframe
Contractual Complaint	Follow contract timeline
Complaint acknowledged in writing	Five days
Complaint investigation to start	Immediately to five days (dependant on complaint severity)

Investigation process	Twenty business days
Formal outcome letter sent	Five business days

The registered person does not need to deal with a complaint that is being dealt with under the procedure provided for in the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, but the registered person does need to ensure that a child is not subject to reprisals for making a complaint or representations under the Children Act 1989 procedure.

Complaints to third parties

It is always important that complaints can be made about Active 8 Support Services to third parties independent of the organisation. This is transparent and provides additional checks and balances to ensure The Service is of a high standard.

Appropriate places to complain to include:

1. The accommodating authority
2. The local authority in which the home is located
3. The local Government ombudsman https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint
4. A complaint about how we process your information https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/

Please also see our **Easy Read Complaints Policy**

At Active 8 Support Services, you can complain to a case worker, the registered service manager or the general manager.

OFSTED Standard(s) directly linked to this Policy	**The leadership and management standard**

Policy Reviewed on Date of Implementation by the Following Company Officer:

Full name:

Laura Winstanley

Job Title:

General Manager

Signature: Laura Winstanley

Date: 30/04/2025

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