

LEEDS BLACK ELDERS ASSOCIATION



Complaints Procedure

Leeds Black Elders Association is committed to providing the best possible service to the organisations and individuals with whom we work, and we try to listen to our members and our users. We acknowledge, however, that there will be occasions when people may not be happy with some aspect of our provision. This Policy exists to make it easier for you to tell us when you are unhappy, or indeed when you have any comment you wish to make about Leeds Black Elders Association. All complaints will be taken seriously and we aim to treat you with respect and consideration throughout the complaints process.

What kind of circumstances may give you reason to a complaint?

You believe you have been treated unfairly on the grounds of your gender/race/religion/age/sexuality or for any similar reason.

You feel that we have failed to provide information about LEEDS BLACK ELDERS ASSOCIATION or its services.

You feel that we have failed to provide a key service.

You feel you have experienced an unreasonable delay in receiving a service.

You feel that a service provided has been inadequate.

You believe that our staff have been rude or unhelpful.

You disagree with a decision we have made or a policy we operate.

What should I do to complain informally?

You can make your complaint to the member of staff concerned, or to any line manager. Any worker will be pleased to tell you who is the most appropriate person to approach. This may be done in person, or by telephone or email. We aim to listen to what you have to say, to apologise whenever necessary, and to try to agree a solution with you. We will try to deal with your complaint to your satisfaction immediately; however, there will be occasions when this may not be possible (for 2 example during holiday periods).

If there will be a delay in responding to your complaint you will be told, and we will reply as quickly as possible either verbally or in writing as you wish. If you remain dissatisfied with us or with our response you should use the formal procedure outlined below.

What should I do to make a formal complaint?

You may use the formal complaints procedure at any time: you do not have to complain informally first if you believe that your complaint is too serious for that approach.

Attached to this Policy you will find a basic form, which you may use to make your complaint; if you would prefer, you may write a letter instead.

In either case, you should feel free to obtain assistance with writing your complaint if you need it; such assistance could be given by a friend or family member, a Citizens Advice Bureau or Advocacy group or a similar organisation. You should then post or hand-deliver your complaint to Leeds Black Elders Association, marking the envelope clearly "Private & Confidential, for the attention of the General Manager" (if your complaint involves the General Manager, you may address it to the Chair of Trustees).

What will happen after I complain?

Leeds will aim to acknowledge receipt of your formal complaint within three working days; this will be done by letter, so it is important that you provide us with your correct postal address. This letter will also tell you what steps will be taken to investigate your complaint: we will normally ask you to meet with us to discuss the problem (in which case you are welcome to be accompanied by a person of your choice from outside of LEEDS BLACK ELDERS ASSOCIATION), and we may allocate responsibility for this meeting and the subsequent investigation to the appropriate line manager. If your complaint is about a member of staff, it will be passed immediately to the appropriate line manager; the General Manager will write to you to tell you that this has been done and to explain that our internal inquiry process has begun. We aim to resolve all complaints quickly, and to keep you informed throughout the process.

You will receive a full written response usually within 28 days; if there will be any further delay, you will be informed. This letter will include information on what to do if you are still dissatisfied.

Will my complaint be confidential?

Your complaint may be seen by managers or trustees of Voluntary Action – Leeds, as part of the investigation process but we will make every effort to safeguard your privacy; your complaint will not become "public knowledge" unless you so wish. You should be aware, however, that if your complaint is specifically about a member of staff or a trustee of Leeds Black Elders Association, it will be necessary for that person to be told that a complaint has been lodged against him/her, to allow the investigation to proceed.

What if I am still unhappy – can I appeal?

You can appeal if you are unhappy about any aspect of the formal procedure outlined above, including the final response. You cannot go directly to the appeal stage unless you have used the formal procedure.

If you wish to appeal, you should complete the form, which will be attached to the letter sent to you after the formal procedure. Again, you can obtain assistance with this, as explained above.

You should post or deliver this form to Leeds Black Elders Association, marking the envelope "Private and Confidential: for the attention of the Performance Review Committee" if your appeal relates to some aspect of LEEDS BLACK ELDERS ASSOCIATION or its services, OR "Private and Confidential: for the attention of the Personnel Committee" if your appeal relates to a staff issue.

What will happen if I appeal?

You will receive written acknowledgement of your appeal usually within five working days, along with information as to when and how it will be dealt with. A panel (consisting of three trustees from the appropriate committee or directly from the Board of Trustees) will normally be formed to consider your appeal. You may attend this meeting (bringing a person of your choice from outside LEEDS BLACK ELDERS ASSOCIATION, if you wish to), or make written comments if you would prefer. Your appeal and the original complaint will be considered in detail, and you will receive a written response within 14 days of the hearing. Leeds Black Elders Association will make every effort to comply with the decision or recommendations of the appeal panel.

What if I am still dissatisfied following an appeal?

The appeal stage is the final internal one as far as LEEDS BLACK ELDERS ASSOCIATION is concerned. If you remain unhappy, you are entitled to contact Leeds City Council Social Services or your local councillor or MP. You are, of course, entitled to do this directly without using our complaints procedure at all, although obviously we would encourage you to tell us first and allow us to try to resolve matters if you are unhappy.

What should I do if I wish to praise LEEDS BLACK ELDERS ASSOCIATION, or just make a suggestion or comment about something?

Leeds Black Elders Association welcomes all comments and suggestions, and tries to take account of these where possible when planning work, etc.

Please write to us, telephone, email or fax, or use the LEEDS BLACK ELDERS ASSOCIATION service user evaluation forms when these are sent to voluntary and community organisations.

Leeds Black Elders Association

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