

Complaints Policy

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Stakeholder Consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> All Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Union <input type="checkbox"/> Employee Voices Group <input type="checkbox"/> Head Office Managers <input type="checkbox"/> C&S Managers <input type="checkbox"/> Department/Other: _____	This Policy will be reviewed every 5 years from the date of implementation or earlier if deemed appropriate for any legislation or regulatory changes. If this Policy is not reviewed within the above timescale, the latest approved Policy will continue to apply.	
Equality Impact Assessment		No	N/A

Version Control

Date	Owner	Version	Reason for Change
June 25	Head of Compliance & Improvement	6.0	Cyclical Review

Summary of Changes

Section	Change
All	Moved over to new template – No material changes to policy principles
4.0	Included reference to Child Protection Procedure
5.0	Added section on complaints from children and young people. The SPSO Model now includes child friendly complaints handling

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1.0 Policy Statement

This Policy and its associated Procedure explain Ark's complaints handling process.

Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve service provision and customer satisfaction. Our Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) gives details of who can make a complaint, how Ark will seek to resolve complaints and also how we record, report and learn from complaints. Ark has adopted the Model Complaints Handling Procedure developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Breaching this Policy may result in disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the violation.

1.1 Legal & Regulatory Framework

This Policy and associated Procedure are written with regard to the following:

- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002
- Care Inspectorate Guidance
- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Data Use and Access Act 2025
- UK General Data Protection Regulation.
- UK Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018)

2.0 Scope

This Policy applies across all of the Ark group and the associated Procedure provides examples of the types of complaint which may be received.

Ark's definition of a complaint is: 'an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about Ark's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of Ark.'

Ark is committed to ensuring that our complaints process is accessible to everyone. We can provide information in alternative formats and offer support such as interpreters or advocates for those who need assistance to make a complaint.

3.0 Roles & Responsibilities

There is a range of standard expectations which underpin all policies. Read more about standard [role and responsibilities](#) in addition, the following specific responsibilities apply to this Policy.

All staff have a responsibility to be aware of:

- The Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP);
- How to handle and record complaints at the frontline response stage;
- Who they can refer a complaint to, in case they are not able to handle the matter;
- The need to try and resolve complaints early and as close to the point of service delivery as possible; and
- Their clear authority to attempt to resolve any complaints they may be called upon to deal with.

4.0 Related Policies, Procedures & Documentation

G12a Complaints Handling Procedure

G32 Unacceptable Actions Policy

CS03b Child Protection Procedure

[Ark's Vision, Mission & Values](#)

5.0 Complaints

Ark's Complaints Handling Procedure follows a two-stage process:

Stage 1: Frontline Resolution – We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to the point of service delivery. Complaints handled at this stage should be responded to within five working days.

Stage 2: Investigation – This stage is appropriate for complaints that are complex, serious or have not been resolved at Stage 1. We aim to respond within twenty working days. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed and a revised timescale agreed.

If a customer is dissatisfied with Ark's final response, they have the right to refer the complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland.

SPSO Contact Details:

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Phone: 0800 377 7330

Post: SPSO, Freepost SPSO

Complaints from Children and Young People

We recognise the right of children and young people to complain if they are unhappy with our services. We are committed to making our complaints process accessible to people of all ages.

Children and young people can make a complaint directly or with help from a trusted adult or advocate. We will listen carefully, respond appropriately, and make sure they are kept informed throughout the process. If a complaint raises a child protection concern, we will follow our safeguarding procedures.

We will ensure staff are trained to support children through the complaints process and to respond in a way that is respectful, safe, and appropriate to the child's age and understanding.

6.0 Training & Monitoring Requirements

6.1 Training

Staff dealing with complaints will have training appropriate to their needs and to the needs of the organisation as identified on their individual learning plans. Ark will ensure that relevant employees have an awareness of this procedure and receive adequate training to enable them to effectively fulfil their roles and to ensure complaints are handled appropriately.

Training on this Policy and associated Procedure will form part of the induction process for all relevant staff and refresher training will be provided on a regular basis.

6.2 Monitoring

Reporting of complaints

We will report at least quarterly to senior management and the Business Performance & Compliance Sub Committee on:

- Performance statistics, in line with the complaint's performance indicators published by SPSO;

- Analysis of the trends and outcomes of complaints (this should include highlighting where there are areas where few or no complaints are received, which may indicate either good practice or that there are barriers to complaining in that area).

Publicising complaints information

We publish on a quarterly basis in tenant and service user newsletters and on our website the outcome of complaints and the actions we have taken in response.

This demonstrates the improvements resulting from complaints and shows that complaints can help to improve our services. It also helps ensure transparency in our complaints handling service and will help to show our customers that we value their complaints.

We will publish an annual complaints performance report on our website in line with SPSO requirements and provide this to the SPSO on request. This summarises and builds on the quarterly reports we have produced about our services. It includes:

- performance statistics, in line with the complaint's performance indicators published by the SPSO; and
- complaint trends and the actions that have been or will be taken to improve services as a result.

These reports must be easily accessible to members of the public and available in alternative formats as requested.