



Carers of East Lothian

Supporting people who
care for family and friends

Comments, Suggestions and Complaints

Carers of East Lothian is committed to ensuring that all of the people we support receive the best possible service. We welcome any comments on the services we provide and any suggestions for improvements and we look on these as a method of learning so that we can improve the services we provide.

Informal Comments or Concerns

If you have any comments or suggestions about our service please first consider speaking informally to the Carer Support Worker concerned. Our role is to support carers and if we are not getting that right then we want to quickly resolve any concerns. However, if you would prefer not to speak to the Carer Support Worker concerned you could contact our Chief Executive for an informal conversation.

Formal Complaints

You can also use our formal complaints procedure to raise any concerns. We are committed to ensuring that:

- All concerns and complaints are taken seriously and handled consistently.
- Concerns and complaints will be dealt with in a positive and constructive way and within a reasonable timescale.
- Expressing concerns or making a complaint will not affect the kind of support we can offer you
- We will reply in writing to all concerns and complaints.

How to make a complaint

Please send complaints to the Chief Executive at our address below. If your complaint is about our Chief Executive, please contact the Chair of our Board of Trustees. We ask that you include your name and contact details in your complaint so that our Chief Executive can contact you to make further enquiries. You can make a complaint anonymously but this makes it difficult for us to investigate and impossible for us to reply to you.

How we will consider your complaint

In the first instance our Chief Executive will investigate your concerns. This will normally involve speaking to you to be sure we understand your concerns properly and may involve speaking to any staff concerned. Once these enquiries are complete, our Chief Executive will write to you and let you know what action, if any, s/he has taken to address your concerns.

If you are not satisfied with the Chief Executive's response to your complaint please consider speaking to him / her informally to see if there are other ways to resolve your concerns.

If we do not resolve your concerns

If you remain unhappy with the way your complaint has been dealt with you can appeal to our Board of Trustees. Please make any appeal in writing outlining the reason you remain concerned and including your name and contact details. We will not consider an anonymous request for an appeal.

Appeals will be considered by a delegated sub-committee of the Board of Trustees. If they decide that the complaint needs further investigation they will do so fully before making a final decision on what action, if any, to take on the complaint. We aim to complete the investigations and inform you of the outcome, wherever possible, within 30 days of receiving the request for an appeal.

Support with complaints

We recognise that you may want support if you want to make a complaint about us and we suggest you contact an Independent Advocacy Service who may be able to support you. You can find local services at www.siaa.org.uk or we can put you in touch with one.

If your complaint is about our Counselling Service

We have a separate, more detailed Complaints Policy about our Counselling Service in order to include information about the COSCA Codes of Practice etc. If you have used our Counselling Service you should have received a copy of this but you can always ask us for a copy at any time.

Our Funders

We are funded for much of our work by both East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian. If you feel we have not appropriately addressed your complaint, you can pursue this with them through the Council's or the NHS's complaints procedures and ultimately to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman or, in certain circumstances, to the Mental Welfare Commission.