

COMPLIMENTS, FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Policy & Procedure Implementation Checklist

Policy lead:	<i>Director of Services</i>
Document author:	<i>Director of Business & Quality Assurance Manager</i>
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Diversity / Equality Impact Assessment required:	<i>No</i>
Data protection compliant:	<i>Yes</i>
Staff training / update required:	<i>All staff updated via March 26 Newsletter</i>

Complaints Form amended to allow the charity to capture complaints from 16 and 17 year olds.

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 1.1 BACKUP is committed to putting the young people we support first¹ by improving the quality of our services and their experience of them. Compliments, Comments and Complaints are important to us in providing insight into what we are doing well and where we may need to focus improvements. We record this feedback, regularly monitoring what people tell us, and using the information to help us deliver the best services. We also seek to manage and respond to feedback in a consistent and professional manner.
- 1.2 This document sets out how BACKUP manages and responds to compliments, comments and complaints. It explains our processes and our obligations.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 This procedure uses the following definitions:
- A compliment is an expression of praise concerning a service, staff member or young person.
 - A comment is feedback, opinion or a suggestion for how a service can be improved.
 - A complaint is a direct expression of dissatisfaction about a standard of service, actions or lack of actions by BACKUP, its staff or contractors.
- 2.2 Complaints, compliments and comments can be raised by young people, carers and/or others acting on behalf of young people who currently use our services or who are applying to do so and anyone else who comes into contact with the charity.

3. COMPLIMENTING OUR SERVICE

- 3.1 Compliments are valuable, welcome and important and when they are received, either verbally or in writing, they will be recorded. Compliments enable BACKUP to:
- Understand that our service is being provided to the satisfaction of young people.
 - Provide positive feedback to our staff.
 - Influence our organisational and service development.
- 3.2 Compliments can come from outside agencies, people who have encountered BACKUP, staff members and other young people.

¹ BACKUP uses the term “*young people*” to refer to the people who need to use its services; as opposed to service users, customers or clients.

3.3 Compliments can be about anyone involved in BACKUP; They can be about a service we have provided, positive feedback about members of staff or recognition of achievement of our young people.

3.4 At BACKUP, we encourage young people to share their compliments, not just about staff, but also about each other. This could be recognition of achievements, helpfulness or other general positive comments.

3.5 Staff who work at BACKUP are also encouraged to fill in a compliments form if they wish to give a compliment about another staff member, service or young person.

4. COMMENTING ON OUR SERVICE

4.1 Comments are ideas, feedback or suggestions about our service. All feedback is logged and actioned, if necessary. Feedback can be treated as an informal complaint or a compliment depending on the nature of the feedback received. All feedback is logged to help us to spot patterns and trends that enable us to continuously improve our service delivery.

4.2 Feedback can be made verbally, in writing or using the QR code on the posters and leaflets given to young people. Feedback is treated as an informal complaint will not follow the same procedure as a formal complaint, but it will be logged, an investigation will take place, and it will be monitored in accordance with regulations.

5. COMPLAINING ABOUT OUR SERVICE

5.1 BACKUP aims to provide an effective and caring service. However, we realise that, even in the best run organisations, there may be times when things go wrong. We undertake to:

- Be open to complaints about our service; to this end we will make a standard form available.
- Investigate complaints in as short a time as possible, consistent with the practicalities of gathering information and arranging meetings.
- Keep a complainant informed on progress, at all times.
- Allow a complainant to be accompanied by a friend (who is there for support but not to speak on behalf of the complainant), or a representative (who is there to present the complainants case).
- Use experience gained from any complaints to improve the way we work.
- Keep BACKUP Board of Trustees informed of how we are dealing with complaints.
- Never punish, penalise or victimise any young person who makes complaint.
- Record the numbers of complaints received from 16 and 17 years olds, as part of the requirements linked to our registration with Ofsted.

6. TYPES OF COMPLAINT

6.1 We can usually categorise the types of complaints that we are likely to receive as follows:

- neighbour nuisance complaints where a third party complains about one of the young people supported by BACKUP
- complaints from a young person supported by BACKUP about the service they have received from the charity and
- service complaints where a young person or their representative complains about the way BACKUP delivers its service.

Note: *for monitoring by our funders' / commissioners, we need only record complaints about service delivery. The BACKUP Board of Trustees receive details of all complaints.*

7. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

7.1 Young people should be supported to access an independent advocate if they would like one. Young people have a legal right to independent advocacy.

7.2 Advocacy must be offered by staff when the initial complaint is raised and a record kept when they have offered advocacy. Advocacy services available include but not limited to:

VoiceAbility
0800 3031660
helpline@voiceability.org

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)
0808 808 1001
help@nyas.net

7.3 Anyone can make a complaint on behalf of a young person. If a third party making a complaint on behalf of a young person is not a Member of Parliament (MP), local Councillor, or a person with power of attorney, BACKUP will require written permission from the young person before corresponding with them. If someone has made a complaint on behalf of a young person, BACKUP will respond directly to them and send a copy to the third party who made the complaint on their behalf.

7.4 If we receive an anonymous complaint that raises a safeguarding or whistleblowing issue, this will be dealt with under the relevant policy. Our ability to fully explore and feedback on the issue may be limited due to the nature of anonymous complaints. We will record, investigate and monitor anonymous complaints in the same way that we treat other feedback.

Unreasonable, intensive and vexatious complainants

- 7.5 BACKUP staff will always take great care and have clear evidence before recommending action to be taken for unreasonable, intensive and vexatious complainants, such as:
- limiting the complainant to one medium of contact or with one named colleague
 - time limits on the number and duration of contacts with colleagues per week or month
 - refusing to register and process further complaints about the same matter
 - apply a formal warning which may involve other policies e.g. Anti-Social behaviour or occupancy agreement terms.
- 7.6 Any course of action will always be the charity's last attempt after trying to resolve a situation. A senior manager will always communicate actions to the complainant in writing. All complainants' have the right to speak to an independent body, such as the Charities Commission or Ofsted (if aged under 18).

8. CHART OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLICY & PROCEDURE

BACKUP Board of Trustees	Overview of complaints received.
Chief Executive and Directors	Responsible for setting, monitoring and reporting against this Procedure and implementing changes and any ' <i>lessons learnt</i> '.
Line Managers	Responsible for ensuring staff and they understand and follow the process.
All Staff	Responsible for being alert to complaints and following BACKUP procedure.

- 8.1 The recipient of the complaint or the investigating officer (who may or may not be the same person) updates the Complaints Log.
- 8.2 Managers must also check if the issue is a '*reportable incident*' and therefore needs to be passed to Commissioners.

9. FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 9.1. It is easier for BACKUP to resolve complaints if they are made quickly and directly. Anyone who wishes to raise an issue or complaint, should first try to talk to the staff in the Project or office they are complaining about – so that they can try to resolve the concern on the spot. Individuals can complain to us verbally in person or by phone, in writing, via email or by using our Complaints Form.

9.2. Young people can make a formal complaint in a variety of ways, including verbally, in writing or by using the project's QR code which links to an online complaint form.

All complaints formal or informal are recorded on the central complaints log, investigated and outcomes recorded in line with regulation.

9.3. BACKUP needs the personal details of the person making the complaint and as much information about the complaint that they can give us:

- what has gone wrong
- how they want to resolve the issue.

9.4. Individuals should try and make their complaint within three months of:

- the event they want to complain about
or
- as soon as they find out they have a reason to be concerned or complain (***but no longer than 6 months after the event***).

Everyone making a complaint will receive a copy of BACKUP's Complaints Policy.

9.5. If an individual is unhappy with the response to their complaint, they can ask for it to be reviewed (i.e. appeal the decision and move the complaint to a Stage 2 Complaint).

9.6. Reviews and appeals, depending on the nature of the complaint, will be heard by:

- The Chief Executive or two Senior Managers
or
- two or no more than three members of the Board of Trustees.

9.7. If an individual is still unhappy with the response to their complaint, they can forward their complaint to the Charity Children's Commissioner or Bolton Duty Team. Details in appendix.

9.8. If a young person is under 18, they also have the option to complain to Ofsted. Details in appendix.

9.9. **Communication of Formal Complaints Policy:**

- **Young people:**
 - All young people supported by BACKUP will be given the details of how to make a formal complaint when they move into a Scheme and receive support to understand it. (When they sign their occupancy agreement and receive an induction.)
 - They will be offered Advocacy when filing their formal complaint, it is their choice to accept.

- We will include a young person friendly version about the Complaint's Procedure in the Welcome Pack.
- The complaints form is young person friendly and accessible online or in paper form.
- Young people will be informed of outcomes and learning.
- **Partners & Stakeholders:**
 - BACKUP will make the Complaints Procedure available to any agencies who require / request it and publish it on its website.
- **Staff:**
 - Staff will be given a copy of the Procedure as part of their induction.

10. STAGE 1: OFFICIAL COMPLAINT

10.1. If a complaint cannot be settled informally between:

- an individual and a member of BACKUP staff, then the person who is unhappy or concerned should:
- Email: businesssupport@backup-charity.org.uk for a formal complaints form or write to Complaints, Business Support, BACKUP North West, Bridgeman House, Bridgeman Street, Bolton BL3 6 BY or
- Complete the online form available on the Formal Complaints leaflet, which will automatically be sent directly to the Business Support Team's inbox and logged on the central complaints log.

This can be done by a young person, a neighbour, a relative, friend, advocate or external agency.

10.2. It is important to make the complaint as specific as possible. The more information that can be provided about what has happened, the easier and quicker it may be to resolve the problem.

10.3. **Stage 1: BACKUP will deal with the complaint as follows:**

- **Within one week of receiving the complaint** – the complainant will receive an acknowledgement letter from the Business Support Team or a member of staff, advising who will be dealing with the complaint (Investigating Officer) – this is the ***Complaint Acknowledgment Letter***.
- **Within ten working days of receiving the complaint** – the Investigating Officer will carry out an investigation; meeting or speaking to the relevant staff and service users.
- **Within three weeks of receiving the complaint** – the Investigating Officer will write to the complainant with the decision (this is the ***Stage 1 Complaint Decision***).

10.4. The complainant will then have a further 10 days to proceed to Stage 2 if they are still unhappy.

11. STAGE 2: REVIEW BY A SENIOR MANAGER OR MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

11.1. If the complainant isn't satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they can ask for it to be reviewed. This must be done ***within 10 days of receiving the Stage 1 Complaint Decision Letter.***

11.2. The Review will be carried out by:

- a Senior Manager (that is a Director of the Chief Executive (CEO))
or
- two or no more than three members of the Board of Trustees.

11.3. The role of this Appeal Panel is to give fresh consideration to the complaint and to decide whether the complainant has been dealt with fairly. They can also decide what, if any, redress is to be offered to the complainant.

11.4. BACKUP aims to hear the complainant's appeal as quickly as possible. If it is proving to be difficult to keep to the target timescales given in the Complaints Procedure, the charity will advise the complainant of the reason why and set a date for the next stage of the process.

11.5. Stage 2: The Appeal Panel will deal with the complaint as follows:

- **Within two weeks of receiving the Appeal** – the nominated Chair of the Appeal Panel (or, in the case of Trustees, a Senior Manager acting on their behalf) will write to the complainant with the date of the Appeal Hearing.
- **Within four weeks of receiving the Appeal** – the Panel will meet with the complainant, giving them the opportunity to speak personally to the Panel. The complainant may bring someone with them to the Appeal, if they wish.
- **Within 6 weeks of receiving the Appeal** – the Chair of the Panel (or, in the case of Trustees, a Senior Manager acting on their behalf) will write to the complainant setting out their decision. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.

11.6. The Director of Business, or Chair of the Appeal Panel will report to the full BACKUP Board of the outcome and whether there are any implications for the management of the scheme. They will also advise on whether our Complaints Policy has been effective.

12. Escalation of Complaints

Once the complaint has been fully investigated and you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you can contact;

The Children's Commissioner

Help at Hand is the Children's Commissioner's advice and assistance service for children in care, children who have a social worker or are working with social services, children living away from home and care leavers.

You can call the Children's Commissioner on 0800 528 0731

Or contact them through their website – www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/contact

Bolton Council Adult Services

Quality Assurance & Improvement Team

Email: quality@bolton.gov.uk

Tel: 01204 334236

If you're under 18, you can also raise a formal complaint directly to Ofsted.

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/ofsted

13. MONITORING & REVIEW

13.1. The Board of Trustees will receive feedback on complaints that give rise to concerns about the quality of service delivery and the charity's Key Performance Indicators will be used to report on:

- the type of complaint and the stage that it is at
- whether we have met the time targets within our policy
- whether there are any resulting changes to the way that we deliver our service.

BACKUP Policy, Procedure, Strategy this document relates to:	• Disciplinary and Grievance Policy and Procedures. • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion • GDPR General Data Protection Regulation Policy and Procedures. • Media Policy.
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	• Notification of a Serious Event • Public interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy. • Recruitment and Selection Policy • Safeguarding Adults and Children • Staff induction • Staff Code of Conduct (in BACKUP's Staff Handbook). • Staff Handbook
Ofsted Regulation Standards this document relates to:	• Annex A – Request for information at a full inspection of a supported accommodation provider (questions 17 – 20). • Regulation 4 – Leadership and management standard • Regulation 5 – Protection Standard • Regulation 10 – Workforce Plan • Regulation 17 – Fitness of staff • Regulation 18 – Employment of staff • Regulation 20 – Safeguarding • Regulation 21 – Missing Child Policy • Regulation 27 – Notification of a serious event

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This policy is due for renewal on the
1st April 2026

BACKUP NORTH WEST

Bridgeman House, 77 Bridgeman Street, Bolton, BL3 6BY.

www.backup-charity.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1064698. Company Number 3399617.

APPENDIX A - COMPLAINTS FORM



Formal Complaints Form

Feedback in the form of complaints, comments and compliments are very important to BACKUP – it helps us to improve the services we offer and sometimes the way we work.

If we provide you with accommodation or support services, please remember that you will not be punished, penalised or victimised for making a complaint or a negative comment.

Anyone who comes into contact with BACKUP can make a complaint, make a comment or pay us a compliment.

This form is for formal complaints; if you wish to make an informal complaint or give us some feedback, speak to a Project Manager or any other member of staff and ask them to pass on the information. Alternatively, you can fill in the comments form. We will acknowledge your feedback within a week.

If you wish to make a formal complaint this needs to be in writing and you can use this form or scan the QR code here.



If you want to, you can talk to someone else, perhaps a worker from another agency, or a friend, and ask them to help. Staff at BACKUP will also help you if you want them to.

When making a complaint, you have the right to an independent advocate to support you and to help you have your voice heard. An advocate is someone independent who is on your side and helps you speak up. Advocacy is free and confidential.

Staff can help you to access an advocate or use one of the useful numbers below

Voice Ability

0800 3031660

helpline@voiceability.org

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

0808 808 1001

help@nyas.net

After you've made a complaint:

- **Within one week of BACKUP receiving your complaint** – you will be contacted to say that your complaint has been received and you will be told who is going to look into it.
- **Within roughly two weeks of BACKUP receiving your complaint** - they will look into what you have said.
- **Within three weeks of receiving the complaint** - you will be written to with a decision. (If you're not happy with the decision, you can ask for it to be looked at again.

Your details



Your Name:



Date of
complaint:

Are you under 17 or under ? (please tick) Yes ☐ No ☐

Because we are registered with Ofsted, it is important that we record complaints from 16- and 17-year-olds.

Address

Postcode



Please tell us about your complaint.

2 How did it make you feel?

(Circle or tick the faces that match your feelings)

 Happy  Okay  Sad  Angry  Worried  Confused

Other: _____

3 What do you want to happen next?

(Choose as many as you want)

- ☐ Someone to say sorry
- ☐ Things to change
- ☐ To talk to someone about it

Other: _____

4 How can we contact you?

- ☐  Phone: _____
- ☐  Email: _____
- ☐  Through my trusted person- please provide contact details below

5 Who can we talk to about your complaint?

 Name of trusted adult, friend or advocate and their contact details:

 **Signature**

Post / or take this form to: <i>Business Support BACKUP North West Bridgeman House 77 Bridgeman Street Bolton BL3 6BY</i>	Or email it to: businesssupport@backup-charity.org.uk
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Once the complaint has been fully investigated and you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you can contact

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Website: www.gov.uk/ofsted



Comments & Compliments Form

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If we provide you with accommodation or support services, please remember that you will not be punished, penalised or victimised for making a complaint or a negative comment.

Anyone who meets BACKUP can make a complaint, make a comment or pay us a compliment.

This form is for someone who wishes to make a comment or compliment. A comment is feedback, an opinion or a suggestion for how the service can be improved. We will acknowledge and log these comments; they will help us to improve how we work.

You can also share an **informal complaint** using this comments form. This will still be taken seriously, recorded, and acted on — but it won't go through the full formal process. Feedback will be given if not anonymous.

Compliments and positive feedback really matter to us! They're always welcome and appreciated. When you share something good (whether you tell us in person or write it down), we make sure it's recorded and passed on. Compliments can come from both staff and young people — whether it's about the service or about each other

We want to hear from you.

You can tell us something good 👍 or share an idea 💡

You do not have to write your name unless you want a reply.



1. About You (You can skip this)

Name: _____

Age: _____

Which project do you live at: _____

Do you want a reply?

☐ ☒ Yes

☐ ☒ No

How should we reply?

☐  Phone: _____

☐  Email: _____

☐  Through my support worker (add their name below)

2. What do you want to tell us?

Tick one box:

- ☐ 🌟 Compliment (something good)
☐ 💬 Comment
☐ 💡 Idea / Suggestion

If it 🌟 **If it is a compliment that involves a person**
Who helped you?

What did they do?

💡 **If it is a comment or suggestion**
What could we do better?

How would this help?

❤️ **Anything else?**

Thank you for sharing your thoughts.

Your voice is important.

If you need help filling this in, you can ask a member of staff, a friend or someone you trust.

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