

Beyond Limits provides policies and procedures to promote safe and consistent practice across the Organisation. The framework laid down within our policies and procedures lets everyone know how we work and reflects our values and mission statement. Our policies and procedures are written to help us, employees of Beyond Limits, to make good, safe decisions.

Beyond Limits expects all employees to be familiar with the contents of all policies and procedures relevant to their role and to understand how to apply them within their daily work.

None of these documents stand alone, all fit within the larger framework of the way we work and any associated policies which are particularly relevant will be directly referenced.

Questions, Suggestions and Complaints

Questions, Suggestions and Complaints - what this means to Beyond Limits

Beyond Limits expects all employees to be familiar with the contents of all policy and procedure relevant to their role and to understand how to apply it within their daily work.

Beyond Limits aims to provide a high-quality service to the people it serves. To ensure that we do this we will, listen and take all feedback very seriously; on occasions we might get things wrong and when this happens, we will learn from our mistakes. Our expectations of our employees and theirs of Beyond Limits is that we are all open to giving and receiving feedback, having difficult conversations and challenging others respectfully about every aspect of our work. We know that we learn best and can change behaviours and situations with better outcomes, if people are encouraged to learn from mistakes. We therefore see feedback in the form of questions, suggestions and complaints as a learning experience for all.

The aim of our questions, suggestions and complaints policy is to make clear what is defined as a question, suggestion and complaint and give a clear step by step process and timescale to resolving any issues that are brought to our attention.

Beyond Limits defines a **question** as:

A query about an aspect of the standard or quality of the service that deviates or falls short of that stated in the policies and procedures for Beyond Limits or the service design and working policy of the person being supported.

Beyond Limits defines a **suggestion** as:

An idea or recommendation that would improve the quality of service delivery or identifies aspects of the standard or the quality of service delivery that could be improved.

Beyond Limits defines a **complaint** as:

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard or quality of the service, action or lack of action by Beyond Limits or its employees which affects a person we provide a service to.

This Questions, Suggestions and Complaints policy for Beyond Limits is based on 4 key principles:

1. It will seek to improve the service we provide through providing space for employees and Beyond Limits to give and receive feedback on every aspect of our work. We will take the learning from questions, suggestions and complaints to prevent reoccurrence and to improve the quality of future service delivery.
2. It will be responsive by offering those who complain a clear response to their concerns. Responses will be provided within clearly defined timescales and in a sensitive and sympathetic manner.
3. It will be easy to access and well publicised – we understand the people we support sometimes have difficulties understanding written formats, so the process will be explained or given to people in an accessible format tailored to their needs. We also understand the people we support may not have capacity to make a complaint, so we will ensure the people that are closest to them will be made aware of the process. People will have the complaints process explained to them when we start to support them and will be reminded of it on a regular basis.
4. It will be well managed – we will aim to be objective and resolve problems before they manifest into complaints wherever possible. However, if a complaint is made, we will resolve it as quickly as possible, be transparent about the process and respect the complainant's privacy and confidentiality.

Procedure – What will happen?

All questions, suggestions and complaints will be treated in confidence. The only exception to this is where Beyond Limits have a statutory requirement to share information e.g. for safeguarding purposes.

The name of the complainant will not be divulged any more than is necessary within Beyond Limits. However, it should be recognised that if a complaint involves a person we support or an employee, it may be very difficult to investigate the matter without talking to that person. We will discuss this with the complainant, as well as any information we must share with external people.

We will not normally deal with anonymous complaints, other than in a very general way, given the difficulty of carrying out a full investigation. We will however retain such complaints on file as they may provide an early warning of a problem.

The questions, suggestions and complaints procedure consist of various stages. Normally a complaint will be lodged at the earliest stage and then proceed, as appropriate, by way of an appeal through the remaining stages.

The stages are:

Informal

This is often the quickest and easiest way to resolve a question, suggestion or complaint by raising it at an early stage with a Team Leader and Service Leader. This stage may be used to advise an employee of a problem, or suggested change to a service allowing them to resolve the matter first-hand. The Team Leader and Service Leader will acknowledge the question, suggestion or complaint and respond to it within 5 working days. This would normally include meeting with the complainant and working out together how this could be resolved. We urge the use of informal feedback wherever possible.

All informal questions, suggestions and complaints will be discussed with the Service Leader group (as appropriate) and outcomes fed back to the team for continuous learning and development. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their informal question, suggestion or complaint then it can be formalised.

Stage One (Formal) A Service Leader

This stage formalises the complaint and involves one of the Service Leaders. This person will ascertain whether the informal stage has been used and if not why. Complaints at this stage are those not able to be resolved at the informal stage. The designated Service Leader will acknowledge the complaint in writing within **5 working days** of receipt and respond to the

complainant in writing within **15 working days**, to advise of the outcome. All formal questions, suggestions and complaints will be discussed with the other Service Leaders and outcomes fed back to the team. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their formal question, suggestion or complaint then it will move on to the next stage.

Stage Two (Review)

This stage involves a service leader who has not already been involved in the process. This stage involves complaints of a greater complexity or seriousness not able to be resolved at a formal stage, or where an outcome is not to the satisfaction of the complainant. The complaint will be acknowledged by them within **5 working days** of receipt and they will respond to the complainant within **15 working days**, to advise of the outcome. This stage provides the opportunity for the designated Service Leader to review the action taken to date and the decision reached.

It also provides an opportunity for first time complaints of a serious nature to be heard at Director Level. This could be incidents of maladministration, impropriety or serious allegations about employee members.

Stage Three (Final Review) Senior Service Leader or Director

This is the final internal stage and is aimed at providing an opportunity for complainants to have their complaint heard by the Senior Service Leader or Director where:

The complainant seeks a final internal appeal of an earlier decision

The complaint is a policy or resource issue

The complaint is about misconduct by a senior level employee (Service Leader)

The complaint will be acknowledged by them within **5 working days** of receipt and they will respond to the complainant within **20 working days**, to advise of the outcome.

External Review

As a small organisation Beyond Limits may require / or decide to use external suitably experienced individuals (from other like-minded organisations) to undertake any of the roles identified above.

If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily under Beyond Limits complaints procedure, or the complainant wants to make their complaint to an external agency, the complainant may refer their complaint to one of the following Agencies:

Care Quality Commission:

National Correspondence, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA

Telephone: 03000 616161

Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

The Relevant Commissioning Body**Local Advocacy Services****Recording and Monitoring Complaints**

A record of the investigation will be recorded with paperwork pertaining to it stored in the file of the person being supported, or the personnel file of the employee member involved. Any questions, suggestions or complaints received will be reported at the Leadership Meeting on a weekly basis. In the interests of confidentiality, only minimum information will be discussed in this meeting. All complaints will be recorded and held on the private drive of the organisation's server, under the file name CQC with access limited to senior employees.

The following information about complaints should be recorded:

- Name of complainant
- Brief description of complaint
- Whether the complaint is formal or informal
- Date of complaint and who is going to investigate

Once completed all records must be kept of the investigation, outcome and action taken and a record that the complainant has been informed. All evidence, investigation paperwork, and correspondence with the complainant must be kept in the most appropriate file (person we support, or employee file).