

ChatterBug Complaints Policy

ChatterBug is committed to providing high quality services for all individuals that come into contact with our service working in an open, connected and dependable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders. We believe we achieve this most of the time: if we are not getting it right please let us know. In order to ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which you can let us know of for any reason you are not satisfied with your dealings with the organisation. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our customers and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore we aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly;
- keep matters low-key;
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Definition: ChatterBug defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with ChatterBug or with a member of staff,) that requires a formal response'. A complaint may be made by the person who is affected by the action, or it may be made by a person acting on behalf of a patient.

Purpose: The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

ChatterBug's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- take action where appropriate.

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A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to ChatterBug's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow ChatterBug a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond ChatterBug's control.

Responsibility for Action: All Staff

Confidentiality: Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and ChatterBug maintain confidentiality. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Monitoring and Reporting: Directors of ChatterBug will receive annually an anonymized report of complaints made and their resolution.

Timescales for making a complaint

Complaints must be made not later than: twelve months after the date on which the matter which is the subject of the complaint occurred; or twelve months after the date on which the matter which is the subject of the complaint came to the notice of the complainant.

The complainant will be given a named contact/their contact details (either regionally or nationally) who will be their point of contact throughout the complaints process.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

In the first instance, if you are unhappy with an individual sometimes it is best to tell him or her directly. If you feel this is difficult or if you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the member of staff who dealt with you, or their manager, so that he or she has a chance to put things right. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking. If the complaint has been made verbally, the complainant will be given a copy of their verbal statement which is considered the formal complaint and asked to confirm that it represents the issues they wish to raise.

All written complaints will be logged. You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 7 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within 28 working days.

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Our contact details can be found on our website www.chatter-bug.com

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint then you can write to ChatterBug's Director and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect the Director to acknowledge your request within 7 working days of receipt and a response within 28 working days.

ChatterBug's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.