

COMPLAINTS AND APPRECIATIONS POLICY

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1. Policy

- 1.1. The Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) are committed to delivering a high standard of service to anyone who engages with any aspect of our work
- 1.2. All employees, trustees, volunteers, and contractors working on behalf of the Great North Air Ambulance are required to behave in an appropriate and professional manner in the handling of complaints. This includes openness, honesty, and a willingness to:
 - Listen to the complaint
 - Understand and work with the complainant to address the complaint
 - Respond in a timely manner
- 1.3. This policy relates only to complaints and appreciations from patients, their relatives, supporters, and other individuals or bodies external to GNAAS. Internal complaints should be dealt with using the relevant policy
- 1.4. Details of how to make a complaint will be published on our website or issued in writing upon request. Information that needs to be published/issued is set out in Appendix A to this policy
- 1.5. All complaints and appreciations, including anonymous complaints, will be logged and an initial acknowledgement of receipt provided within 14 working days of receipt
- 1.6. The following logs will be maintained:
 - 1.6.1. Charity Services:
 - i. Complaint's log, Quality Group used to log all complaints received relating to Charity Services
 - ii. Appreciation's log, Quality Group used to log all appreciations received relating to Charity Services
 - iii. Complaints Log, Operations used to log Operations complaints received into Charity Services and transmitted to Operations to be logged on SharePoint
 - iv. Appreciations Log Operations, used to log Operations appreciations received into Charity Services and transmitted to Operations to be logged on SharePoint
 - 1.6.2. These logs are held on the departmental drive in the 'complaints and appreciations' folder (m:\complaints and appreciations)
 - 1.6.2.1. Operations:
 - Complaint's log
 - Compliments (appreciations) log
 - 1.6.2.2. These logs are held on the SharePoint system under Operations\Feedback (Complaints Appreciations)
 - Complaints/appreciations relating to the Trading Company should be forwarded to their offices in Newton Aycliffe and marked for the attention of the General Manager
- 1.7. In line with requirements placed upon us under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, upon initial receipt of a complaint relating to the provision operational services the complaint will be brought to the attention of the Director



of Operations who will consider whether the complaint relates to the delivery of regulated activities¹; and if it does:

- i. Whether the details of the complaint indicate that a notifiable safety incident has occurred.
- ii. Whether notification to a relevant person is required; and
- iii. Whether notification or referral is required to an appropriate authority

- 1.7.1. If the complaint appears to relate to a notifiable safety incident, then the complaints log will be updated, and the complaint will be treated accordingly
- 1.8. All complaints will be assigned to a relevant manager or member of staff, who will be required to investigate the complaint to identify what might have caused the complaint and the actions required to prevent similar complaints in the future. In assigning responsibility due regard will be given to the level of skill and knowledge required to undertake the investigation
- 1.9. The person undertaking the investigation will record their findings in the complaints log along with details of corrective action to be taken. Where no action is recommended, the reasons for this must also be recorded
- 1.10. We will aim to conclude the investigation within 14 working days of acknowledgement of receipt. Where an in-depth investigation is required, we will aim to conclude this within 28 working days. Where it is not possible to work in line with these timescales the complainant and the relevant Director/Head of Service must be kept informed of progress.
- 1.11. The outcome of the investigation and proposed actions must be communicated to the complainant. Details of the complaint's escalation process will be included within this response
- 1.12. The outcome of the investigation and any corrective action required will also be communicated to the individual against who the complaint was made and their line manager
- 1.13. Where a complainant is not satisfied with the response that they receive then they will be given the opportunity to escalate their complaint to the Chief Executive.
- 1.14. For escalated complaints, the Chief Executive will decide what action should be taken in relation to the complaint, this may include for example further investigation and recommendations of additional corrective action. The Chief Executive findings will be communicated to the complainant
- 1.15. Where a complaint is not satisfied with the Chief Executive's findings, and the complaint relates to the charity's fundraising practices, the complainant will be advised of their right to refer their complaint to the Fundraising Regulator, provided that they do so within two months of receiving our final response
- 1.16. The complaints and appreciations logs will be reviewed by the Director of Operations and the Head of Compliance who will be responsible for reporting to the Chief Executive and the Board of Trustees via the FAR Committee and Operations and Clinical Committee on:

¹ Regulated activities – the services we are registered to provide under registration with the CQC, currently:

- Transport services, triage and medical advice provided remotely
- Treatment of disease, disorder or injury
- Surgical procedures
- Diagnostic and screening procedures



- i. The number and general nature of complaints and appreciations received
 - ii. Any trends in complaints and any areas of risk that need to be addressed
 - iii. Any trends in appreciation and any areas of good practice that could be shared
- 1.16.1. The Director of Operations will report to the Operations and Clinical Committee
- 1.16.2. The Chief Executive will report to the FAR Committee
- 1.17. The Chief Executive is responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees in relation to escalated complaints, including corrective action taken

2. Legislative requirements

- 2.1. Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 Regulation 16: Receiving and acting on complaints
- 2.2. Code of Fundraising Practice section 2: Responsibilities of charitable institutions and those who govern them
- 2.3. The Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016: Fundraising reporting requirements guidance

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Appendix A: How to make a raise a complaint or appreciation in relation to our work

The Great North Air Ambulance Service is committed to delivering a high standard of service to anyone who engages with any aspect of our work, whether that is from a fundraising or operational perspective.

We are keen to hear from anyone who believes we have fallen short of the high standards we set ourselves or alternately would wish to commend the work of the service its employees and volunteers. You can contact us through the following methods:

- In person, a complaint can be made in person to any member of our staff. They will log your complaint/appreciation, and this will be forwarded to the relevant person (Quality Dept in first instance) within our organisation
- Phone, please contact us on 01325 487263, a member of our team will log your complaint/appreciation, and this will be forwarded to the relevant person (Quality Dept in first instance) within our organisation.
- E-mail, please e-mail us at quality@gnaas.co.uk. Please include in the subject line of your email the words 'complaint' or 'appreciation'.
- Website, please go to the 'contact us' area of our website and complete the contact form, selecting 'complaint' or 'appreciation' from the dropdown menu.
- Post, you can write to the following address:

**Complaints and Appreciations
Quality Department
Great North Air Ambulance Service
Progress House
Urlay Nook Road
Eaglescliffe
Stockton-on-Tees
TS16 0QB**

We will acknowledge and provide a response to your feedback within **14 working days** of receiving it.

Please note:

Social media, we appreciate the feedback that we receive via our social networks. However, where your feedback is in relation to a complaint, we would ask that you use one of the methods set out above to raise your complaint with us and give us an opportunity to resolve it to your satisfaction



Complaints

In dealing with complaints, we recognise our duty to ensure that consent and confidentiality is not compromised during the complaints process unless there are professional or statutory obligations that make this necessary.

We would expect to resolve any complaint within **14 working days**, however if we need to conduct a more in-depth investigation, we will aim to provide you with a full response within **28 working days**. If we are unable to meet that deadline due to exceptional circumstances, we will of course let you know.

If you are not happy with the response you receive, you can escalate your concerns to the Chief Executive who will consider the matter in more detail. We will include details of the escalation process in our response to your complaint.

Where a complaint relates to our fundraising practices, if you are still unhappy with our response once the Chief Executive has considered your complaint you have the right to refer your complaint to the Fundraising Regulator. This must be done within two months of our final response. We will include details of the Regulator in our final response to your complaint.

Appreciation

It is great to hear when we have exceeded expectations. Messages of appreciation are logged, and feedback provided to the relevant teams or team members.

We may wish to use the information you provide to us in our publications, but we would not do this without first contacting you to gain your agreement.

Anonymous feedback

We appreciate the feedback that we receive from our patients, supporters, and the general public, however where this feedback is anonymous, we are unable to respond.

Dependent on the nature of the feedback, being unable to come back to the complainant may hinder any investigation and prevent us from improving things in future. Any feedback we receive is treated in the strictest confidence and we would therefore request that when contacting us regarding your complaint or appreciation you provide us with your name and contact details.

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