



## OP-POL-02 Complaints Policy

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### 1. Policy Statement

This Policy Statement sets out Framework’s approach to feedback, complaints and conduct matters that Framework is responsible for dealing with. It applies to all Framework services and operations. The accompanying Procedure provides details of how to give feedback, how to complain and how complaints are handled.

Framework is committed to providing the best possible standards of service and to maintaining positive relationships with all its stakeholders. It is essential that all feedback and complaints are handled appropriately to ensure that stakeholders feel confident that their opinions have been heard, considered and acted upon promptly and fairly. Framework will encourage and respond positively to all forms of feedback and will value complaints as an opportunity to learn and continually improve.

Our Policy and Procedure for Complaints and Feedback reflect the best practice identified in the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman’s Principles of Good Complaint Handling document. (For information on the principles please go to [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)).

Where Framework is the landlord for service users, we will comply with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaints Handling Code.

### 2. Definitions

The definitions below are provided to enable a universal and consistent recording of actions across all of Framework’s services.

#### Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting service users, volunteers or external stakeholders.

#### Feedback

Feedback refers to information about a positive or negative experience relating to the organisation which can be used as a basis for improvement or recognition.

#### Incident

An incident is an action by a service user, employee (including volunteers), Board Member or visitor to a Framework premises, which requires the use of formal investigation processes by a number of different managers to address the human, regulatory and reputational impact.



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### Service Request

This is a request by a service user to rectify a problem, which they reasonably believe to be Framework's responsibility (e.g. a property repair).

### Stakeholder

This is a service user or any other person(s), who wish to provide feedback or comment about an aspect of Framework's service.

### 3. Feedback and Complaints

There are occasions when a service user or any other persons, may wish to provide feedback about an aspect of Framework's service or operation. This Policy ensures that feedback, where appropriate, is acknowledged. Regardless of whether this feedback is positive or negative, it is Framework's Policy to record all of it and services should maintain service logs for this purpose.

Service requests should also be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. A complaint should be raised when a service user raises dissatisfaction with a response to their service request.

This Policy does not apply to complaints made by Framework members of Staff. Framework employees must raise any complaints by following the steps outlined in the Grievance or (if appropriate) Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures.

### 4. The Objectives and Purpose of Recording and Investigating Complaints

This Policy aims to ensure that the complaints process is flexible, prompt, impartial and responsive to the needs of individual complainants. It is one of the mechanisms that Framework will use to deliver a high standard of service. Amongst the Policy commitments made by the organisation are that:

- Everyone has the right to complain.
- Those who complain will be listened to and treated with courtesy and empathy.
- Those who complain will not be disadvantaged as a result of doing so and documentation will give the complainant the confidence and ability to complain.
- Complaints will be investigated openly, thoroughly, honestly and will be dealt with in a reasonable time frame.
- Complainants will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation.
- Action to rectify the cause of the complaint will be identified, implemented and evaluated.
- Framework will welcome complaints, seeing them as a positive way for the organisation to learn and inform service development and/ or improvement.
- Complaints handling will be transparent, complying with legal requirements and Framework's policies on confidentiality and data protection.
- Staff involved in, or receiving complaints will be given support.
- Guidance on how complaints can be made and the procedures to be followed in resolving them, will be produced in appropriate languages, formats and media.



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### 5. The Objectives and Purpose of Recording Feedback

This Policy aims to ensure that any feedback received by Framework is used to improve its services. It affirms that:

- Everyone has the right to provide feedback.
- Services should respond to changes in the community, the population, or the situation to make service delivery more effective.
- Framework should maintain an awareness of the impact its services have.
- Its approach to service provision must adhere to the organisation's objectives and values.

### 6. Application of Policy

This policy applies to anyone who has a comment or concern about any of Framework's activities. These include:

- Governance
- Service Delivery
- Income Generation
- Fundraising
- Any other charitable activity

Framework will comply with the Equality Act 2010 to address any issues legitimately raised under the Act. More information on this can be found in Framework's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

It is the responsibility of all Framework staff to ensure that all feedback is appropriately acknowledged and resolved. Relevant staff will be appropriately trained and supported to deal with such requests.

Framework provides access to advocacy services to service users who wish to complain, to present their complaint (or feedback) and then follow it up.

### 7. Assistance and Advocacy

Framework works with disadvantaged client groups, and some individuals may lack the skills or confidence to raise a comment or pursue a complaint. Where people have difficulties with literacy or language, and/ or require support to make a complaint (or provide feedback) for any other reason, Framework will offer:

- Responses to requests for reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act;
- Assistance from a staff member of the complainant's choosing, where appropriate (or)
- The opportunity to use of their own advocate / friend / relative (or)
- Free access to an independent advocacy service
- The right to bring complaints to the Housing Ombudsman under their scheme for service users who are residents.



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### **8. Accountability and Monitoring**

It will be the responsibility of Framework's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to ensure that the Complaints and Feedback Policy is operated effectively across the organisation. The SLT takes responsibility for complaint handling and for ensuring that complaints receive the necessary attention, with information about the process and outcomes reported to the Board.

### **9. Learning from Feedback**

Framework views complaints, compliments, feedback and other comments as an opportunity to learn and improve. It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to disseminate such learning throughout the organisation and to ensure that recommendations for change are acted upon.

Within the Performance Assurance Dashboard, Quarterly KPI Reporting will be produced to summarise the profile and outcomes of complaints. This will be submitted to the Board, the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), Operations Managers and the Service User Advisory Group (SUAG).

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team and the Corporate Leadership Team to analyse complaints, feedback and other comments to determine if there are any themes or trends that may indicate systemic issues, serious risk or opportunities for improvement. Their conclusions will be disseminated to Operations and Service Managers who will ensure that the necessary actions are implemented by services. In addition it is responsibility of Service Managers to ensure that feedback is discussed at Team Meetings.

Information on policy, procedural and other changes arising from complaints will be reported on a regular basis to the Service User Advisory Group and to Framework's advocacy provider, thus informing feedback to service users on the impact their complaints have had.

Where appropriate, individual complainants will receive details of any learning and/ or changes that have been, or will be, implemented as a result of their complaint.

Framework will self-assess its compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code on an annual basis. The outcome of these Self-Assessments will be reported to the Board.

### **10. Procedures, Electronic Recording and Templates**

This Complaints and Feedback Policy will be delivered via a Complaints and Feedback Procedure that is subject to consultation with staff and service users. Standard Templates and Electronic Systems will be used to record Complaints and their outcomes. The data from these will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the Policy and support reporting to the Board.