Introduction:

At Autism Wessex we are committed to providing an excellent service to our service users and stakeholders and to working in an accountable way.

We welcome feedback and view complaints and compliments as an opportunity to learn and improve our practice. Anyone who wishes to comment on the charity’s work or services is encouraged to do so by accessible buttons on our website or by telephone or email.

Policy Aims:

We aim to resolve all complaints quickly, fairly and effectively to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible and welcomed;
- each feedback, receives a prompt response and confidentially is maintained where relevant;
- the process is transparent and timeframes are realistic;

We aim to address complaints as close as possible to the source of the issue, to investigate all complaints and to take them seriously, to resolve all complaints within a reasonable time and to prioritise the complaint to achieve a productive outcome. A log of all feedback is maintained to ensure we meet our aims and learn from feedback;

Why people might want to complain:

From time to time, we may not meet stakeholders’ expectations. Expressions of dissatisfaction might include:

- not feeling treated with courtesy and respect;
- a service not delivered reliably or on time;
- not receiving a service that promotes physical, emotional, material or social wellbeing or safety;
- a service failing to meet a Service User’s needs;
- feeling discriminated against in any way.

Or any other issue that is inconsistent with the expectations of our services.
If at any time during the investigation of a complaint matter arise which warrant investigation under disciplinary proceedings or criminal investigation, the procedure will be paused until those investigations are complete. Similarly, the complaints procedure will be suspended if a complainant is seeking legal redress.

Autism Wessex may, at any stage of the complaints procedure, review a complaint and provide a decision, without a formal investigation, where it is deemed that the complaint is deliberately repetitive or vexatious.

Serious complaints will be declared to the Charity Commission in line with charity regulation and to the relevant regulatory bodies of the service area. If appropriate the relevant Local Authority may also be advised.

This Feedback Policy is based on a five-step approach;

Complaints will be recorded centrally by the Feedback Coordinator to ensure that all feedback is managed in accordance with this policy. Once the issue has been resolved, the Feedback Coordinator will update the Log.

1. The Feedback Log will include:
   - Details of the person making the complaint;
   - Date and nature of the complaint;
   - Actions taken, by whom and timescales;
   - Outcome of the complaint and closure actions.

Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, it should be confirmed in writing.

Confidentiality and GDPR

When an individual interacts with the charity personal information is collected:

An individual has the right to ask for a copy of the information that is held about them and to have any inaccuracies in their personal details corrected. An individual can also request their records be removed from our database or to receive a copy of the information we hold about them. They can also ask us to stop using their data for a specific purpose.

We will aim to acknowledge receipt of all such requests within five working days and respond more fully within 10 days where possible. An individual can exercise any or all of these rights by emailing feedback@autismwessex.org.uk.
Complaints Procedure:

Process:

- The Complainant is encouraged to discuss concerns with the relevant person in the organisation in person.

- Should they not feel comfortable with this they should email their concerns to:

  feedback@autismwessex.org.uk.

  This address is linked to the ‘Submit your Feedback’ button on the Autism Wessex and Portfield School websites;

- The Feedback Coordinator will monitor and log complaints to achieve a timely process;

- The Feedback Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days. The Complainant can expect to hear from the Complaint Lead (named for that case), within the next 10 working days to inform them of how it will be addressed.

- The Complaint Lead will take action within agreed the timeframe (10 working days) to achieve an understanding of the complaint.

- The Complaint Lead will organise the investigation and consider the outcomes with the Investigator. They should maintain contact with the Complainant. The Complaint Lead (member of OMG) will maintain the records in line with GDPR for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it is being processed.

- Should the complaint not be resolved in the above process it may be escalated as follows:

  - Head of Department (OMG Member)
  - Chief Executive Officer;
  - Chairman of the Board of Trustees;
  - CQC and/or Ofsted.

Website:

A 'Submit your Feedback' button accesses the feedback or complaints email.

Please refer to Complaints Flowchart (Appendix 1) for an overview of this procedure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix 1</th>
<th>Complaints Procedure Flowchart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1  Procedure

Feedback

Is the complaint about Portfield School?

Yes  
Address to the head of the school

Is the complaint about Life Skills?

Yes  
Address to head of Portfield School

Is the complaint about Community Support Services?

Yes  
Address to the head of CSS

Is the complaint about Autism Wessex?

Yes  
Address to Chief Executive Officer

Complete the feedback form available on the website and ‘Submit’ or in writing via email to: feedback@autismwessex.org.uk

Feedback submitted via Royal Mail or hand delivered are to be addressed to: Feedback Co-ordinator, Charity Hub, Portfield School, Parley Lane, West Parley, Christchurch BH23 6BP

Feedback submitted via Royal Mail or hand delivered are to be addressed to: Feedback Co-ordinator, Charity Hub, Portfield School, Parley Lane, West Parley, Christchurch BH23 6BP

Feedback submitted via telephone will be transferred to the feedback co-ordinator for documenting and thereafter referred to the responsible staff member

If no resolution is reached ....

Address to Chair of Governors

If no resolution is reached ....

Address to Chair of Governors

If no resolution is reached ....

Address to Chairman of the Board of Trustees

If no resolution is reached ....

Address to Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Feedback Procedure

- Feedback received by email/telephone or via the website
- Feedback received at the School
- Feedback received by CSS/Life Skills/Residential Homes
- Feedback received by any other area

Feedback logged onto centralised record by feedback co-ordinator
Feedback acknowledge via email or letter

Complaint lead to investigate and manage the complaint

Complaint to be resolved within 10 working days
Resolution (including date of resolution is fed back to the feedback co-ordinator)
Documentation is securely stored and maintained by the complaint lead
Closed

Complaint cannot be resolved within 10 working days
Complaint is escalated until resolution
Should the complaint not be resolved after escalation then a mutually agreed third party arbitrator may be appointed to resolve

Response 10 working days