

# Rural Age Concern Darent Valley

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# Information Sheet No 21

www.ageconcerndarentvalley.org.uk

Reg. Charity No 265562

email: enquiries@ageconcerndarentvalley.org.uk

## Complaints Procedure

### If you wish to Comment or Complain

Whether you are new to Rural Age Concern Darent Valley (RACDV) as a Service User or have been using our services for some time, you should expect to be dealt with by any RACDV member of staff or volunteer with respect and without undue delay. When you contact us you should receive a full and correct response, and where applicable, full details of any of our services that may be appropriate and how you may receive them.

We hope you will find no cause for complaint, but we recognise that sometimes things may go wrong. If you wish to comment or complain about any aspect of our service, this leaflet will help you do so. If you suffer from any disability or lack of confidence that would hinder your ability to comment or complain, we would be pleased to arrange independent assistance for you. It is helpful if you can be clear about what seems to be wrong and what you think should be done about it. If you are not sure what could be done, discuss the possibilities with the person to whom you made the complaint, or a friend or relative. If you find you cannot explain your problem yourself, ask a friend or relative to do it for you, and talk it over with them to make sure they understand and can make all the points to us on your behalf that you wanted to make.

RACDV welcome any comments received, which may be good or bad, and we try to be positive by considering any lessons learned from comments or complaints when arranging our ongoing services. Positive or constructive comments assist us to provide and improve properly targeted services that are appreciated by, and beneficial to, the service users like yourself.

#### THE FIRST STEP: PROBLEM SOLVING

Please tell the person you are dealing with or someone senior to them what the problem is. They will try to find a solution to the problem in a way that is acceptable to all people involved. If you feel unable to discuss the matter with the person you are dealing with, please raise it with Mrs. Anne Spendlove, Assistant to the Chief Officer, at the address above. Most problems can be sorted as simply as this. However, if it is not, please refer to the Second Step.

#### THE SECOND STEP: FORMAL COMPLAINT

The next stage is to tell the Chief Officer of RACDV about your complaint. Putting your complaint in writing can be the clearest way of making your point. However, if you prefer, you can make your complaint by telephone, or you may visit the Advice Office, address shown at top of Page One, and speak to John Arnold, the male Chief Officer or Anne Spendlove, his female Deputy. If your complaint relates to the Chief Officer, please write to the Chairman of RACDV at the address shown at top of Page One, marking the envelope Private. Receipt of your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 7 days. It will then be investigated, which may or may not involve interviews with the complainant or witnesses, and a written reply will where possible be sent to you within 28 days of your complaint being received. Where it is not possible for us to respond within 28 days, we will send you a letter explaining this and advising that our final response will be sent within a further 28 days.

#### THE THIRD STEP: COMPLAINTS REVIEW PANEL

If the problem has not been resolved to your satisfaction in the above second step, you can put your complaint to the RACDV Management Committee Review Panel. You may contact the Review Panel by writing to them at the address shown on Page One, marking the envelope 'Private'. Receipt of your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 14 days. The panel will consist of a minimum two Committee members, at the discretion of and selected by the Chairman of RACDV.

The Panel will meet as soon as is possible, normally within 28 days, and will at their discretion review the matter either by written statements, when you and any witnesses may be given an opportunity to write to them explaining the matter, or oral statements, when you and any witnesses may be invited to attend to explain the matter to the Panel. The panel will review your complaint and make recommendations to the Chairman of RACDV. A written reply will be sent to you by or on behalf of the Chairman within 14 days of the date of the panel meeting. In exceptional circumstances, should the panel be unable to conclude their considerations, a letter will be sent to you within 14 days of the date of the panel meeting explaining the circumstances and advising that a final response will be sent within 28 days of the date of the panel meeting.

If your complaint relates to our Consumer Credit Licence issued by the Office of Fair Trading, from the 6 April 2007 you will have the right to refer any unresolved dispute with us or any dispute we have not resolved after a period of 8 weeks to the Financial Ombudsman Service, who can be contacted at South Quay Plaza, 18 Marsh Wall, London, E14 9SR, Telephone 020 7964 1000.

#### IF YOU ARE NOT RECEIVING A SERVICE

If you do not use our services but are affected in some way by the work of our organisation and have cause for complaint please tell us about it, preferably in writing if possible, by contacting Mr. John Arnold, Chief Officer, at the address shown at top of Page One. Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 7 days and fully investigated by RACDV Official's not previously involved in your complaint. A written reply will be sent to you within 28 days of the receipt of your complaint where possible. This will normally exhaust the procedures open to you within RACDV. Your complaint cannot normally be referred to the RACDV Review Panel unless the matter is considered by RACDV to be of particular or fundamental significance.

If you are not receiving a service and the complaint refers to an employment issue, only an existing or recent employee of RACDV may institute a complaint and then via the RACDV Grievance Procedure. Representations from relatives or friends of any employee will not normally be considered unless RACDV considers the issue to be of particular or fundamental importance.