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## Chime Social Enterprise – Policy Document

Chime has made every effort to ensure this policy does not have the effect of discriminating, directly or indirectly, against employees, on grounds of race, colour, age, nationality, ethnic (or national) origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religious belief or disability. This policy will apply equally to full or part time employees. All Chime policies can be provided in large print or Braille format if requested, and language line interpreter services are available to individuals of different nationalities that require them.

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## 1 Introduction

This policy describes how complaints can be made and how they should be managed within Chime. Failure to comply with this policy could result in disciplinary action.

## 2 Purpose

To ensure there is consistency in how complaints are managed and to create a fair system in dealing with complaints arising to ensure service users can have clear expectations on how they will be managed.

## 3 Definitions

*None*

## 4 Duties and Responsibilities of Staff

All staff have a responsibility to escalate complaints to the lead of a service or the named people in this policy as soon as is possible. Staff should be mindful to ensure the complaint is received by the person they are escalating to (for example, if the MD and one of the operations directors are away or on leave, the complaint should be escalated to the operations director who is in the department or to another relevant clinical lead).

Those responsible for responses to complaints must follow the guidance in this document

## 5 Policy

### Chime Complaints Procedure

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- Direct Complaints to Jonathan Parsons, 01392 402225, [jonathan.parsons@nhs.net](mailto:jonathan.parsons@nhs.net), or one of the Operations directors Anna Trotter [a.trotter1@nhs.net](mailto:a.trotter1@nhs.net) or Amelia Quinta [amelia.quinta@nhs.net](mailto:amelia.quinta@nhs.net) Audiology, RDUH (W) Barrack Road, Exeter EX2 5DW or to PALS at RDE.
- Chime will investigate complaints as soon as practicable and in line with the NHS complaints procedure described below.
- Upon receipt of a verbal or written complaint – this should be passed to the Managing Director immediately - or in the absence of the Managing Director or operations managers the next most senior staff member.
- Receipt of the complaint should be acknowledged with the complainant and a timescale for a response agreed.
- The Managing Director, operations manager or deputy for the complaint will pass on to the most appropriate person for comment and collection of the appropriate information.
- A response to the complainant is constructed in the format most acceptable to the complainant – this may most often be in the form of a letter but could be a phone call or email.
- The complainant is reminded in the letter or format of the NHS policy for managing complaints and their right to take it to a further stage if it has not been effectively resolved.

## The NHS complaints procedure explained

If you're not happy with the care or treatment you've received or you've been refused treatment for a condition, you have the right to complain, have your complaint investigated, and be given a full and prompt reply.

The NHS Constitution explains your rights when it comes to making a complaint. You have the right to:

- have your complaint dealt with efficiently, and be properly investigated
- know the outcome of any investigation into your complaint
- take your complaint to the independent Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman if you're not satisfied with the way the NHS has dealt with your complaint
- make a claim for judicial review if you think you've been directly affected by an unlawful act or decision of an NHS body
- receive compensation if you've been harmed

## The NHS complaints process

### Stage one: Making a complaint

If you don't feel like you can solve issues informally then you should make a formal complaint to your service provider such as your GP, dentist, hospital or pharmacist. If you cannot make a complaint yourself, then you can ask someone else to do it for you.

Every NHS organisation has a complaints procedure. To find out about it, ask a member of staff, look on the hospital or trust's website, or contact the complaints department for more information.

If you feel too uncomfortable to complain to the service provider directly then you can make a complaint to the commissioner of the services instead. NHS services are commissioned, planned and paid for by either NHS England or Integrated care systems (ICS)

**Note:** if you have already complained to your service provider then the commissioner will not be able to reinvestigate the same concerns. In this case you should proceed to stage two of the complaints process.

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NHS England is responsible for purchasing primary care services such as GPs, dentists, pharmacists, optical services and some specialised services, and you should contact them if you wish to complain about any of these services.

When you contact NHS England via email ([england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)) ensure you state 'For the attention of the complaints manager' in the subject line.

You should provide as much information as possible to allow NHS England to investigate your complaint, such as:

- your name and contact details
- a clear description of your complaint and any relevant times and dates
- details of any relevant healthcare providers or services
- any relevant correspondence, if applicable

Contact your local ICB for secondary care including hospital treatments, emergency care and some community services, like district nursing.

### **When should I complain?**

As soon as possible. Complaints should normally be made within 12 months of the date of the event that you're complaining about, or as soon as the matter first came to your attention.

The time limit can sometimes be extended (so long as it's still possible to investigate the complaint). An extension might be possible, for instance in situations where it would have been difficult for you to complain earlier, for example, when you were grieving or undergoing trauma.

If you made your complaint to NHS England, you will receive the findings of the investigation together with an appropriate apology and the changes or learning that have taken place as a result of the investigation.

### **Stage two: I am not happy with the outcome of my complaint**

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint you can refer the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, who is independent of the NHS and government.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0345 015 4033

If you have problems with your hearing or speech then you can use a textphone (minicom) on 0300 061 4298. (Calls to these numbers cost the same as a call to a UK landline.) You can also call using [Text Relay](#).

## **Recording Verbal Patient Feedback**

### **Background:**

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Patients often remark about areas of disappointment; this is not addressed as a complaint but should be recorded as it could be a systemic issue or problem easily rectified.

It can relate to the patient process or journey but equally it could be about location and premises.

It is important to record this as part of an audit, which is discussed at Senior Management levels, areas of concern can therefore be reviewed, and should it require contact with the patient this can be addressed to impress upon confidence if fruitful comment.

**Process:**

A [Verbal Feedback form](#) is generated, which is saved in the Chime document folder where staff can access this and complete, passing on to the Managing Director or Operations Manager.

Upon receipt by email from the staff member, the MD/OM will assess the seriousness of concern. This is then addressed immediately with further saved to the Chime confidential drive for audit. If the level of verbal feedback requires patient dialogue, then this will be recorded accordingly. The feedback is added to the complaints log to allow analysis of all feedback that is not entirely positive in one place.

Feedback from patients is also collected from patient satisfaction surveys and feedback cards. This is collated by members of staff who will pass any negative feedback from patients on to the operations managers who will log it on the complaints sheet and respond to the feedback in the same way as verbal feedback responses.

## 6 Archiving Arrangements

Archived copies will be stored on Chime’s “Archived folder” and will be held indefinitely.

## 7 Process for Monitoring Compliance with and Effectiveness of the Policy

To evidence compliance with this policy, the following elements will be monitored:

What areas need to be monitored?	How will this be evidenced?	Where will this be reported and by whom?
Complaints are all logged in the complaints log. The timing of responses and the suitability of actions taken to resolve complaints will be examined in the annual Quality management meeting	In the quality management meeting minutes. The complaints log also keeps a track of timings for complaint responses	The senior management team in the quality management meeting minutes and as necessary will escalate to the board or the ICB if required
The style and format is as described in the Policy for the Development, Ratification and Management of Procedural Documents	Reading the policy	Document owner. Document control list
Associated policies are listed	Document review	Document owner. Document control list

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What areas need to be monitored?	How will this be evidenced?	Where will this be reported and by whom?
Associated risk assessments are listed	Document review	Document owner. Document control list
The Equality Impact Assessment is completed	Document review	Document owner. Document control list

## 8 Equality Impact Assessment

Who might the policy or protocol have a ‘differential’ effect on, considering the “protected characteristics” below? (By differential we mean having a noticeably more positive or negative impact on a particular group e.g. it may be more beneficial for women than for men)

Please insert an “x” in the appropriate box (x) and complete the notes section if applicable:

Equality Groups	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Race			X
Gender			X
Disability			X
Sexual orientation			X
Religion			X
Age			X
Notes			

## 9 References

None

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