



2025

Service User Guide

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Azure Charitable Foundation

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Azure Charitable Foundation

We put every person we support at the centre of everything we do.
This includes people receiving care or education.
Your needs, goals and hopes guide how we plan and give our services

Our Key Principles

1. Your Own Plan

- We work with you to make a personal plan.
- This plan shows what you want to do and what you can do.
- We change the plan if your needs change.

2. You Are Involved

- You help make all the important decisions about your support and learning.
- Your family or advocate can help if you want.

3. Your Strengths

- We look at what you can do and what you want to achieve.
- We help you become more independent and celebrate your progress.

4. Your Whole Wellbeing

- We support your body, feelings, friendships and learning.
- We know these things are all linked.

5. Regular Reviews

- We ask you, your family or advocate for **feedback**.
- This helps us keep your support **up to date** and right for you.



Our Promise

Our way of working helps you have dignity, confidence and independence.

We respect everyone's individuality.

Together we help you build skills, follow your dreams and take part in your community.

About Our Service

The Azure Charitable Foundation provides Care and Support Services. We do this under contracts with Local Authorities, including:

- Northumberland County Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Sunderland City Council

Local Authorities decide what services are needed. They:

- Assess the needs of Service Users
- Make care and support plans

Azure does not decide what services are needed.

We do talk with Local Authorities to give information about services when asked.

The services we provide follow agreements with Local Authorities. You can ask the Local Authority if you want to see these agreements.

Azure does not have to provide services.

We provide services at our own choice.

We can stop providing services or stop certain services at any time.

If we decide to stop services, we usually give 28 days' notice to Local Authorities.

During this time, we will work with them to make sure Service Users still get care.

After the 28 days, we do not have to provide services anymore.

CANCELLATIONS

If you want to cancel or change a service, please contact us as soon as possible.

- If Azure has been asked to provide scheduled services, any changes or cancellations should be made at least 28 days before the service.
 - This gives us time to re-allocate your staff.
 - We will try to adjust your support if we can, but if not, you may still have to pay the full cost of the service.
- Please plan your holidays and other changes carefully.
 - Tell us as soon as possible if you need to make changes.
- If you cancel or change a service with less than 72 hours' notice, you must pay the full cost of the service.

Complaints Policy

Azure Charitable Foundation wants to provide the best care and support for all our Service Users.

We welcome feedback from Service Users, families, advocates, the community, and other stakeholders.

We use feedback to improve our services.

How to Raise a Concern or Complaint

- You, your family, or your advocate can talk to us by:
 - Telephone
 - Email
 - Contact form on our website
 - Talking to our staff in person
- If you need help to raise a concern or complaint, we will support you.

- The Complaints Policy is available on Azure's website.

How Complaints Are Handled

- We will deal with complaints quickly, fairly, and sensitively.
- Complaints are treated confidentially where possible.
- We investigate all complaints without assuming anything.
- Complaints are used to improve services.

Complaints from Service Users

- The policy provides a step-by-step process for complaints about our care and support staff or services.
- If the complaint is from someone outside the Charity, it should be sent in writing to the Director of Care & Support Services.
Julie.redfern@azure-charitable.co.uk
- The Director will investigate and respond in writing within 21 working days.
- If you are still unhappy, you can ask the Chief Executive
peter.wilson@azure-charitable.co.uk to review the response.

Principles

- The policy gives a clear way to make complaints.
- Complaints are handled fairly and respectfully.
- The policy does not give legal rights.
- Azure may change or stop the policy at any time.
- We review complaints annually to see how we can improve services.
- If a complainant is abusive or threatening, Azure may dismiss the complaint.

Concerns vs Complaints

- A concern is a worry or question about the service.
 - Example: A family wants reassurance that the Service User is getting the right support.
- A complaint is when someone is unhappy with actions or lack of actions by the Charity.
 - Complaints include blame.
- Concerns can become complaints if the initial response is not satisfactory.

Equality

- The Charity treats everyone fairly.
- We deal with concerns, problems, and complaints in line with the Equality Act 2010
- This means we do not discriminate because of:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Sexual orientation
 - Any other protected characteristic

Data Protection

Sometimes, complaints include requests for information or documents.

- There are two types of requests:
 1. **Subject Access Request** – This is when the information is about a specific person.
 - This follows the Data Protection Act 1998.
 - We must respond within 1 month.
 2. **Freedom of Information Request** – This is when the information is general and not about a person.
 - This follows the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
 - We must respond within 20 working days.

Complaints Timeline Working days are Monday to Friday.

Stage 1: Informal Complaint

- Raise an informal complaint within **10 working days** of the incident.
- We will acknowledge it within 7 working days.
- We will investigate and respond within 21 working days.

You can speak to a member of staff, Registered Manager, or Director of Care & Support Services. We aim to resolve complaints quickly. The response can be oral or written, but a record will always be kept.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

- If not satisfied with Stage 1, escalate to **formal complaint within 5 working days** of receiving the response.
- We will **acknowledge** it within **7 working days**.
- We will **investigate and respond** within **21 working days** (may be extended for complex cases).

Formal complaints about staff (not Director of Care & Support Services):

- Send complaint in writing to the Director of Care & Support Services. Include:
 - The complaint
 - Attempts made to resolve it
 - Suggested solutions

Formal complaints about Director of Care & Support Services:

- Send complaint in writing to the Chief Executive (address/email below). Include:
 - The complaint
 - Attempts made to resolve it
 - Suggested solutions
- Investigated by the Chief Executive or an appointed senior staff member.
- Acknowledgement **within 7 working days**; response **within 21 working days** (may be extended).
- Chief Executive's decision is **final**.

Contact for complaints about Director:

- Address: Chief Executive, Azure Charitable Foundation, McCallum House, Kielder Avenue, Beacon Lane, NE23 8JT
- Email: governance@azure-charitable.co.uk

Outcomes

At any stage, the Charity may:

- Explain what happened to you
- Admit something could have been handled better
- Assure you it won't happen again
- Describe actions taken or to be taken
- Review our policies
- Apologise

Withdrawing a complaint

You must confirm in writing if you wish to withdraw your complaint to us.

Serial & Persistent Complaints

- Repeated complaints may be marked as serial/persistent.
- We may limit contact or assign a single point of contact.
- We may stop responding if:
 - The complaint has been fully addressed
 - The complainant repeats the same points
 - Behaviour is abusive, aggressive, or intended to cause disruption

Serious incidents (violence, threats) will be reported to police, and the complainant may be barred from Charity premises.

Reporting & Recording Complaints

- When a complaint is received, we keep a record of:
 - The complaint
 - Our response
 - Any actions taken because of it
- The Chief Executive is responsible for keeping these records.
- Records are confidential, unless a government inspector or official asks to see them.
- The Charity's Senior Leadership Team reports complaints to the Azure Charitable Foundation's Senior Leadership Team regularly.
- The Board monitors the number of complaints and their outcomes using reports and data.

APPENDIX 1: Complaint Form

Date	
Service User Name	
Service User Address	
Your name (if different from the above)	
Your address (if different from the above)	
Your relationship to Service User (if applicable)	
Contact number(s) – if you have preferred time within the day, please state it opposite)	
Details of Complaint	
What action have you already taken to try and resolve the complaint?	
What actions do you feel might resolve this complaint? (e.g. an explanation, an apology, review of policy etc.)	

APPENDIX 2: Azure's Care & Support Management team

Julie Redfern	Care & Support Services Director
Karen Clewlow	Associate Director & Registered Manager (Community Access and Cramlington Housing)
Sandra Pringle	Associate Director & Registered Manager (Newcastle and Tynedale)
Naomi Ball	Associate Director (Washington services)

Key Contact(s)

The Azure Charitable Foundation

McCallum House

Kielder Avenue

Beacon Lane

Cramlington

Northumberland

NE23 8JT

Tel 01670 733966

Newcastle Social Services

Shieldfield Centre

4-8 Clarence Walk

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE2 1AL

Tel: 0191 2788100

Northumberland Care Trust

County Hall

Morpeth

NE61 2EF

Tel: 01670 536400

Sunderland Social Services

Civic Centre

Sunderland

Tel: 0191 5205551

Care Quality Commission

City Gate

Gallowgate

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 4PA

Tel: 03000 6161

