



Complaints Policy

How to raise a concern, and how we respond

Assisting Parents with Children Affected by Mental Health
Registered Charity Number 1186256

Version	1.0
Adopted	March 2026
Approved by	The Board of Trustees, signed on its behalf by Lauren Ridley, Chair of Trustees
Policy owner	CEO
Next review	March 2027, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes
Applies to	Anyone who uses, supports, funds or works with APCAM, including children, young people and families

At a Glance

Our promise: We want to hear when things go wrong. Every complaint will be listened to, taken seriously and dealt with fairly, and raising a concern will never affect the support you or your family receive.

Stage	What happens
1. Talk to us	Speak to the person you have been working with, or any member of the team. Most concerns can be sorted out quickly this way.
2. Formal complaint	Write, email or call the CEO at info@apcamgroup.org.uk . We will acknowledge within 5 working days and respond in full within 20 working days.
3. Review	If you are not happy with the outcome, ask the Chair of Trustees to review it within 20 working days of our response.

Safeguarding concerns: If you are worried that a child is being harmed, do not wait for the complaints process. Speak to our Designated Safeguarding Lead or call the Oxfordshire MASH on 0345 050 7666. In an emergency, call 999.

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1. Purpose and Scope

APCAM values feedback, including complaints, as a way of learning and improving our services. This policy explains how anyone can raise a concern or complaint about APCAM, and how we will respond.

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about our services, the actions or behaviour of our staff, volunteers or trustees, our fundraising, or how we have handled personal information. This policy can be used by service users, parents and carers, young people, supporters, donors, partner organisations and members of the public.

It does not cover concerns raised by staff or volunteers about their own employment or role, which are dealt with under the grievance procedure, or concerns about wrongdoing, which can be raised under the Whistleblowing Policy.

2. Our Principles

- **Accessible:** complaints can be made in person, by phone, email, letter or through someone else, such as a friend, advocate or professional.
- **Fair:** complaints will be investigated by someone who was not involved, and everyone will be treated with respect.
- **Timely:** we will keep to our timescales or explain why we cannot.
- **Confidential:** information will only be shared with those who need to know to deal with the complaint.
- **No detriment:** making a complaint will never affect the support you or your family receive.
- **Learning:** we will use what we learn to improve.

3. Children and Young People

Children and young people have the right to complain and to be listened to. We will make it easy for them, for example by letting them tell any trusted member of staff, or by asking a parent, carer or advocate to help. We will explain what will happen in a way they understand, and keep them informed.

4. How We Handle Complaints

Stage 1: Informal resolution

Many concerns can be resolved quickly by talking to the person involved or their manager. We aim to resolve informal concerns within 5 working days. If this is not possible, or you prefer, you can go straight to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal complaint

1. Send your complaint to the CEO at info@apcamgroup.org.uk, by letter to APCAM, 1 The Green, Alvescot, Oxfordshire OX18 2QD, or by phone. If your complaint is about the CEO, send it to the Chair of Trustees via the same address marked "Private and confidential".
2. We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days, and tell you who is dealing with it.

3. The person handling your complaint may contact you to understand more, and will look into what happened.
4. We will send you a full written response within 20 working days, explaining what we found, any action we will take and how to ask for a review.
5. If we need more time, we will tell you why and when you can expect a response.

Stage 3: Review by the Chair of Trustees

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can ask for a review within 20 working days. The Chair of Trustees, or a trustee they nominate who has not been involved, will review how your complaint was handled and the outcome. They will respond in writing within 20 working days. This is the final stage of our internal process.

5. Taking Your Complaint Further

If you remain unhappy, you may be able to contact an external organisation, depending on your complaint:

Organisation	For complaints about
Charity Commission	Serious concerns about how APCAM is run or governed
Fundraising Regulator	How we have asked for or handled donations
Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)	How we have handled your personal information, after you have raised it with us
BACP, UKCP or HCPC	The professional conduct of a registered therapist or counsellor
Oxfordshire LADO	Concerns that an adult working with children may have harmed a child

6. Complaints About Data Protection

If your complaint is about how APCAM has used your personal data, we will acknowledge it within 30 days, investigate it without undue delay, and tell you the outcome, in line with the Data Protection Policy.

7. Unreasonable Behaviour

We understand that people who complain may be upset or frustrated. However, we will not accept abusive, threatening or discriminatory behaviour towards our staff and volunteers. In rare cases, we may limit how someone contacts us, while still making sure their complaint is dealt with fairly.

8. Recording and Learning

All formal complaints are recorded, along with the outcome and any actions taken. The CEO reports a summary of complaints to the Board of Trustees at each meeting, and we use what we

learn to improve our services. Complaint records are kept securely in line with the Data Protection Policy.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Trustees will monitor how this policy is working through regular reports from the CEO, feedback from staff, volunteers and service users, and learning from any incidents or complaints. This policy will be reviewed annually by the policy owner, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or APCAM's services change.

10. Related Policies and Legal Framework

10.1 Related APCAM policies

- Safeguarding Policy 2026 (including WeGame)
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2026
- Whistleblowing Policy 2026
- Data Protection Policy 2026
- Privacy Notice 2026
- Confidentiality Policy 2026
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2026

10.2 Legislation and guidance

- APCAM Constitution (Foundation model CIO constitution, last amended 20 September 2019)
- Charities Act 2011 and Charity Commission guidance on complaints
- Code of Fundraising Practice (Fundraising Regulator)
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (data protection complaints)
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12

Approval

Approved by	The Board of Trustees, by resolution in line with clause 13 of the APCAM Constitution
Signed on behalf of the Board	Lauren Ridley, Chair of Trustees
Signature	
Date adopted	March 2026
Next review	March 2027
Registered address	APCAM, 1 The Green, Alvescot, Oxfordshire OX18 2QD. Registered Charity Number 1186256