



# **Complaints Policy for County Durham LINK**

November 2008

## **County Durham LINK Complaints Policy**

County Durham LINK is committed to investigating complaints promptly and thoroughly in an efficient and understanding way. All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible. A complaint is defined as “a clear expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action affecting an individual or group”.

County Durham LINK wishes to deal with complaints quickly and informally at the first point of contact. Misunderstandings and mistakes can usually quickly be corrected and the LINK will endeavour to resolve all such complaints at the first stage. Where the complaint cannot be handled this way, then the procedure set out below should be followed:

- The complaint should be made in writing via e-mail or letter and sent to the LINK Host.
- An acknowledgment letter will be sent within ten working days if the matter cannot be dealt with immediately.
- The matter will be investigated by the Host and a final written response will be provided to the complainant within twenty working days of receiving any complaint.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the final written response, a formal meeting will be arranged with the County Durham LINK Chair and complainant which will be minuted by the Host. A letter, along with copies of the minutes will be sent to all parties explaining the outcome of the complaint.

- If, after investigation and formal meeting, the complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, then a written appeal can be made within ten working days to the Standards Committee:

County Durham LINK  
Standards Committee  
Pioneering Care Centre  
Carers Way  
Newton Aycliffe  
County Durham  
DL5 4SF

The Standards Committee will meet to make a decision on whether the complaint is upheld and what further action is appropriate (if any). A further written response will then be sent to the complainant within 20 working days of the Standards Committee meeting.