

Complaints Procedure

10.12 Making a complaint

Policy statement

We believe that children, parents and all persons we work with are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our organisation and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the organisation. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach with the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our organisation to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Procedures

All sites/departments are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, and their outcome. A copy of all complaints will also be held at Parenting Project Head Office. This is to be made available to complainants, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any person who has a concern about an aspect of our organisation's provision talks over his/her concerns with a manager first of all.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- We record the issue, and how it was resolved, in the child's file, if appropriate, and in the complaints files held in the site or department where the complaint.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs the complainant moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing.
- For complainants who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints in

the Complaint Investigation Record (below); the form may be completed our manager and signed by the complainant.

- Our organisation stores all information relating to written complaints from complainants in the child's personal file if appropriate, and within our complaints folder. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the manager may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the manager meets with the complainant to discuss the outcome.
- We inform complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of him/her making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with our manager and the chief officer. The complainant may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and our manager should have the support of the management team.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made, as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the complainant cannot reach agreement with us, we invite an external mediator to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers, but can help us to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.

- Staff or volunteers within the Parenting Project are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with our staff and the complainant, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the complainant and our manager and chief officer is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.
- A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board

- Complainants may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the organisation's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Complainants can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at:

Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,
Manchester M1 2WD Tel: 0300 123 1231
- If a child appears to be at risk of harm, we follow our Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures.
- In these cases, both the complainant and our organisation are informed and a manager will work with Ofsted or Warwickshire

Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- A record of complaints in relation to our organisation, or the children or the adults working in our organisation, is kept for at least three years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is available for complainants and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.

Complaint Investigation Record *(always please type wherever possible)*

Date of Complaint			
Source of complaint			
Complainant (in writing, including email)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complainant (in person)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complainant (phone call)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ofsted (including complaint number if known)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nature of complaint			
Please give details of the complaint <i>(please include who the complainant is e.g. 'parent/'professional')</i> :			

How it was dealt with	
Children's Centre - Internal investigation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head Office - Internal investigation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigation by Ofsted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigation by other agencies (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please give details of any internal investigation or attach any outcome letter from Ofsted:	
Actions and outcomes	
Internal actions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions agreed with Ofsted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actions agreed with LA	<input type="checkbox"/>
No action	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action imposed or agreed with other agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please give details:	
Has a copy of this record been shared with complainants / other? Yes or No Has this been shared with the team? Yes or No Has this been shared with the Trustees or Advisory Board? Yes or No	

Name of recorder:	Outcome notified to complainant / other: Date:
Signature:	Position: Date Completed: