

Complaints Procedure Policy

1. Policy Statement

We are committed to providing a high-quality service to children, young people, families, and external stakeholders.

We recognize that on occasion individuals may wish to raise concerns or make a complaint. This policy sets out how complaints can be made, how they will be managed, and how outcomes will be recorded and communicated.

We aim to ensure that:

- Complaints are listened to and taken seriously.
- Complainants receive a timely and fair response.
- Children and young people feel safe, supported, and empowered to raise concerns.
- Learning from complaints informs service improvement.

2. Accessibility

- This policy and procedure is available in alternative formats (large print, easy read, audio, translated versions) on request, to meet the needs of children, young people, families, and other stakeholders. - Information about how to make a complaint is displayed in child-friendly language and formats across the service.

3. Scope

This procedure covers complaints raised by:

- Children and young people attending the service.
- Parents, carers, and family members.
- External individuals or organizations with a legitimate interest in the service.
- Volunteers, partner agencies, or visitors.

4. Procedure

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- Wherever possible, complaints should be raised directly with the staff member concerned or their line manager to allow for quick resolution.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, it will progress to the formal process.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

1. Submission: Complaints can be made in writing, verbally, via email, or in an alternative format to suit the complainant's needs.
2. Acknowledgement: Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
3. Investigation: A senior manager will investigate the complaint. This may include gathering evidence, speaking with relevant staff, and listening to the complainant's perspective.
4. Outcome: A written response will be provided within 20 working days (or sooner where possible), setting out findings, decisions, and any actions taken.

Stage 3: Appeal

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing within 10 working days of receiving the response.
- Appeals will be reviewed by a senior leader not previously involved in the complaint.
- The appeal outcome will be communicated within 20 working days and will be final.

5. Recording & Monitoring

- A complaints log will be maintained, recording:
 - Date complaint received
 - Nature of complaint
 - Actions taken
 - Outcome and timescales
 - Any learning or changes to practice
- The log will be reviewed termly by senior leadership to ensure patterns are identified and improvements made.

6. Feedback to Complainants

- All complainants will be informed of the outcome and any actions taken.
- Where appropriate, feedback will be gathered to check whether the complainant is satisfied with the way the complaint was handled.

7. Children & Young People

- Children and young people will be supported to raise complaints through staff, key workers, or by using child-friendly complaints forms.
- They will be reassured that complaints are welcomed and will not result in negative consequences.
- Children and young people will be provided with information about independent advocacy services and supported to access them if required.

8. Monitoring & Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or best practice guidance changes.
- Feedback from children, young people, staff, and external stakeholders will inform updates to the policy.

Last review date: 30/09/2025

Next review date: 30/09/2026