



Services for Children, Families and Wellbeing

CHILDREN IN CARE **Children's Homes**

Complaints

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Complaints

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Children living at the home must know that they can complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living at the home. Children must feel that they can complain and be supported in doing so. Any complaint made is to be addressed seriously and without delay. Any complaint must be responded to and children kept informed of the progress. Children must be informed that they can make a complaint regarding any aspect of care they receive whilst living at the home, including all the staff working within the home.

Any complaint regarding Child Protection must be dealt with in accordance with Trafford Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection/Child in Need Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with Trafford Children's Services Procedure Manual Complaints and Representations Procedure 1.6.1

Environment

The staff working at the home must ensure that the home listens to the views of children and an environment is created which allows children to complain.

- 1) All children living at the home are to be informed of their rights to complain and the complaints procedures. This must be undertaken when the child is admitted to the home.
- 2) Staff should always adopt a flexible and helpful approach in handling complaints.
- 3) Children at the home are to be informed of the Children's Rights Officer's role and informed that they can make a complaint using the Children's Rights Officer.
- 4) It is forbidden for any reprisals to be made against a child making a complaint.
- 5) Any person who is the subject of a complaint can not be the same person who has responsibility to deal with or respond to the complaint.

Informal Complaint

- 1) Some minor complaints can be dealt with immediately and quickly be resolved informally by negotiation and problem solving.
- 2) Children should be informed who is dealing with the matter, how it will be taken forward and when they are likely to receive a reply. This must be done within two days of the complainant expressing dissatisfaction.
- 3) Staff must respond to minor complaints quickly and inform the child of the progress.
- 4) Staff must record on the child's running sheet the nature of the complaint.

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- 5) A Complaints Book is held at the home to provide a written record which details the date of the complaint, nature of complaint, action taken and outcome of the complaint.
- 6) Staff must inform the Registered Manager that the child has made a complaint.
- 7) An informal resolution form should be sent to the Complaints Officer after every complaint has been resolved.
- 8) If the complaint can not be resolved informally the complaint would move to the formal stage.

Formal Complaint

- 1) In the event of the complaint not being resolved or the complaint being very serious, the complaint would be dealt with as a formal complaint.
- 2) Children can complain by completing a Complaints Form detailing the Complaint and send this to the Complaints Officer Compliance and Governance Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford M32 0TH.
- 3) Complaints can be made by telephone by contacting Steve Byrom, Compliance and Governance Officer, on 0161 912 4698. Email address of Steve Byrom is – Steven.Byrom@trafford.gov.uk
- 4) The Director (Services for Children, Families and Well-Being) will be informed, and the complaint will be dealt with under Trafford's Complaints and Representations Procedure.
- 5) Children are to be encouraged to contact the Children's Rights Officer whose role is to support/represent or advocate on behalf of the child during the investigation. If necessary, the Children's Rights Officer can provide an independent advocate if the child wishes this.
- 6) Children can complain directly to Ofsted and children must be made aware of the contact details (see the homes welcome pack). If children want to complain about something to someone not working in Trafford then they can contact the 'Office of the Children's Commissioner'.
- 7) A child or young person who lives away from home or who receives social care, who needs advice or assistance, can call the Children's Commissioner on: **0800 528 0731** or email: advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
- 8) The current Children's Commissioner for England is: Anne Longfield
Write to: The Office of the Children's Commissioner, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.
- 9) Complaints received by the Complaints Officer are investigated. The Complaints Officer will appoint the Investigator and the report will be forwarded to the

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Assistant Director Services for Children, Families and Wellbeing who will prepare a response. The report and Service response will be sent to the child within 28 days. If a complaint is resolved at this stage the child, Complaints Officer, Children's Rights Officer and any person(s) will be informed in writing.

- 10) This report may identify good practice recommendations or policy implication. The Service Manager would work with the Registered Manager to implement.
- 11) This would be the end of this stage of the complaint investigation.

Review Panel

- 1) In the event of the complaint not being resolved at the formal stage the Complaint would be taken to the 'Review Panel' Stage at the request of the complainant.
- 2) The Children's Rights Officer will support, represent and advocate for the child during this process.

Training

All staff working at the home are to receive training in the complaints procedures covering the following areas:

- What constitutes a complaint
- How can children be supported in making a complaint
- Procedures for dealing with informal complaints
- Recording complaints
- Responding to complaints made by others within the community e.g. neighbours

Complaints from neighbours / local community

- 1) Any complaint received regarding the home must be responded to as quickly as possible.
- 2) Staff must remain professional and polite at all times.
- 3) Staff must listen to the complaint and try to resolve immediately.
- 4) Staff must apologise for any disturbance or damage if any caused.
- 5) Staff must record the date, nature of complaint and any action taken.
- 6) The Registered Manager has the responsibility of being kept informed of all complaints punctually.

Complaints

Monitoring and Reviewing

The Registered Manager of the home is responsible to regularly review the Record of Complaint which includes:-

- Checking complaints and actions taken are recorded fully
- Checking that the operation of the complaints procedure has been undertaken correctly
- Monitor the level and types of complaint made
- Identify any patterns of complaint

The Registered Manager must take appropriate action arising from such a review; this could have impact on the homes policies and practice.

It is the responsibility of the Registered Manager to follow up any further actions in relation to individual cases.