

Guidelines for Writing a Complaints Procedure for Parents

This is a guide document only.

The setting may wish to set specified time scales for the different stages or it may wish to select only the registered person to deal with complaints, rather than a nominated management member.

It is useful for the document to begin by stating what commitment of staff and management have to working to ensure that the setting runs smoothly. It can then be stated that there may be occasions when users may have a problem or complaint, in which event the Complaints Procedure will be used. This should have more than one stage.

Stage One

If a parent/carer is unhappy about a particular issue, the first stage should suggest voicing the concern with an appropriate member of staff, normally the senior worker. Sometimes a straightforward discussion between those involved can resolve the situation; if it doesn't then it would be necessary to move to Stage Two.

Stage Two

The name, address and phone number of a nominated member of management who deals with the Complaints Procedure should be displayed at the setting. At this stage the complainant should contact that person and report their complaint.

It needs to be decided who is responsible for investigating the complaint; this may be the registered person and a nominated member of management. This needs to be stated. These people will also be responsible for liaising between the complainant and respondent and (in the case of a child) the parent/carer. There may be a meeting of all those concerned. Someone needs to be responsible for keeping the complainant informed of developments.

Stage Three

If the complaint is still not satisfactorily resolved, then it should be put in writing to the registered person, who must investigate the complaint and keep the complainant informed of developments. Advice may be sought from appropriate organisations such as BAND and Ofsted.

At all stages there should be agreement between all the parties concerned as to suitable time scales for action to be achieved. The complainant must be kept informed of events, in writing, within 28 days of making the complaint.

If, at the end of Stage Three, the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, and the setting is registered with Ofsted the complainant may write to Ofsted to investigate any complaint that relates to a childcare/welfare/registration issue.

Further Information

- A copy of the “Parents – Ofsted contact number” poster must be displayed on the notice-board of the registered provision.
- As a registered provider all written complaints relating to the welfare requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.
- Registered providers must provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.
- The complaints record (even if there have been no complaints) will be kept for at least 3 years from the date of completion, or longer if there is an outstanding query.

Parent's Complaints Procedure

We aim to provide a high quality, efficient and accessible service to parents/carers and children. At regular intervals the management and staff meet to discuss and review the daily running of the setting, as well as possible improvements to the services offered by the setting. However, from time to time a complaint may arise about some aspect of the setting, or an individual member of staff. Usually it should be possible to resolve any problems informally, as soon as they occur.

Stage One

Misunderstandings often arise through a simple breakdown in communication, and if we do not know of concerns we can do nothing to resolve them. A straightforward informal discussion between those involved may be all that is needed to set things right. We hope that any issues of concern can be resolved at this stage.

If it is not possible to resolve the issue informally, there is a formal complaints procedure that can be followed. This is laid out below.

Stage Two

You should ask a worker for the name and telephone number of the designated manager. You do not have to discuss the complaint with a worker if you do not wish to.

Contact the manager and voice your complaint. They may deal with the complaint directly or call a meeting with other members of management and yourself, to discuss the complaint in detail. If a meeting is called the management will investigate the complaint within 10 working days. If the complaint involves another parent/child/staff member they may be asked to attend as well, to answer appropriate questions. Any witness to the complaint/incident may also be called to attend the meeting. A written record of the meeting will be made.

Stage Three

If informal discussions of a complaint or problem have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, you should put your complaint in detail and in writing to the registered person. Relevant names, dates, evidence and any other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included.

We will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible – within three working days at least – and fully investigate the matter within 10 working days. If there is any delay, we will advise you of this and offer an explanation. The registered person will be responsible for sending you a full and formal written response to the complaint within 28 days of the complaint being made at the Stage Three level.

The formal response to the complaint will be sent to you and copied to all relevant members of staff if appropriate. The response will include recommendations for dealing with the complaint and for any amendments to our policies or procedures emerging from the investigation.

The registered person will arrange a time to meet with you and any other relevant individuals, such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint and our response to it. The registered person will judge if it is best for all parties to meet together or if individual meetings are more appropriate.

If you are still unhappy?

If you are unhappy with the result, you may raise the complaint (in writing only) with:

Ofsted National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231.
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents

A full written report will be made to the setting.