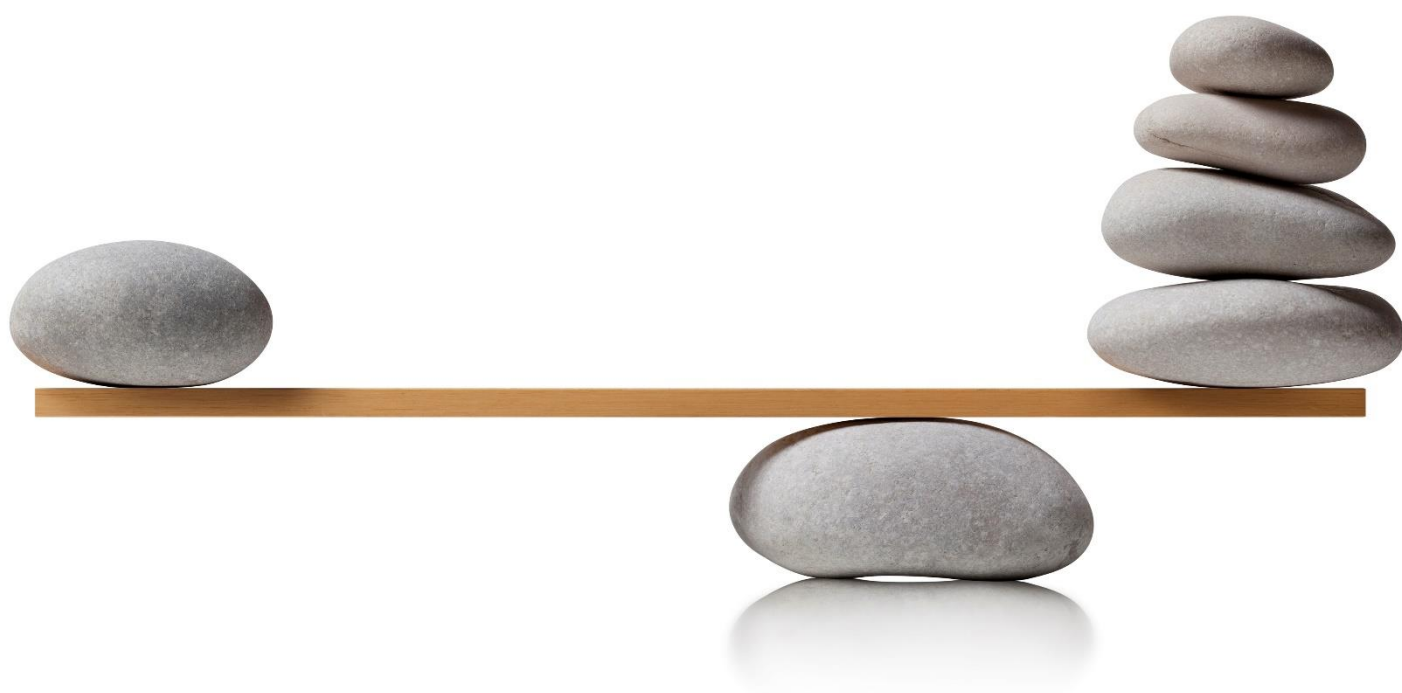


Foster Carers Complaints Procedure

Date: July 2022



Introduction

Current and prospective Foster Carers can make a complaint about any aspect of the Fostering Service that affects them directly. Foster Carers and prospective Foster Carers should be provided with information regarding the complaint procedure.

This procedure covers any incidents where foster carers have concerns in relation to bullying or unacceptable behaviour towards them. Any incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with effectively and without delay.

In the first instance, Foster Carers may wish to consider raising any concerns with their Supervising Social Worker or with the Manager of the Fostering Service. This is often the quickest way to resolving issues. They can, however, make a formal complaint straight away if they prefer.

If a Foster Carer is helping a child in their care to complain or wish to make a complaint a letter on their behalf, they will need to refer to the Complaints, Compliant and Comment Guidance.

Standards and Regulations

Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care

- [Standard 2 – Understand your role as a Foster Carer](#)
- [Standard 4 – Know how to communicate effectively](#)

Complaints Procedure

Formal complaints should be made in writing. The Fostering Service will always try to deal with this informally. This does not mean that Foster Carers are not being taken seriously. It is because the complaint is more likely to be dealt with quickly and to their satisfaction when it is dealt with in this way. This is known as a Stage 1 complaint. All complaints are recorded by the Fostering Service and the Fostering Manager monitors all complaints made about the service/service delivery.

If Foster Carers are not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 complaint process their complaint will be forwarded to the Head of Corporate Parenting who will allocate to someone independent of the Fostering Service to investigate. To take a complaint to Stage 2 a Foster Carer will need to be clear about which aspects of their Stage 1 complaint they are not happy with and why, and state what their desired outcome is.



What if I am still not happy?

Local Authority Foster Carers can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman if they remain unhappy. Foster Carers can also contact Ofsted if they continue to have concerns about the Service

Tips for making a complaint

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman offer the following advice for complaints:

Don't delay

- Make your complaint as soon as possible after the event. It is much easier to remember the details.
- If you are unhappy with the reply, you may have the opportunity to take your complaint to a second stage. Again, do this as soon as possible and explain why you are not happy with the first reply.

Check what you need to do and be clear you are making a complaint

- Make sure you are complaining to the right person / department. Your Supervising Social Worker should be able to tell you who you need to contact to make a complaint.

Put it in writing

- It is helpful to put your complaint in writing if you can. Make sure to write 'complaint' at the top of your letter or email, so there can be no doubt.

Be clear and brief

- Cover all of the relevant points but be as brief as you can.
- Make it easy to read by using numbered lists and headings to highlight the important issues.
- Give your contact telephone and email details, as well as your address. Then, if the person dealing with the complaint needs more information, he or she can contact you and ask.



Provide evidence

- Send copies of relevant documents – but only those that will help the Complaint Officer understand your complaint or provide evidence to support it. Make sure you keep copies yourself – you may want to keep any original documents and send copies of these with your complaint.
- Keep notes of any telephone calls about the complaint, including the name of the person you spoke to. This may be important later.

Be clear about what you want

- Explain clearly what you hope to achieve by complaining. But be realistic; your request needs to be fair and in line with to the problems you have had.

Be polite

- Whether writing or speaking to a Complaint Officer, try to remain polite and calm.

Respond appropriately

- Respond appropriately if asked to do so by the Complaint Officer. Read any letters and documents that are sent to you. If you cannot reply within the stated timescale, tell them why and ask for more time.