

**The  
Children's  
Society**

# The Children's Society Complaints Policy and Procedures

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## 1. Why do we have a complaints policy?

- 1.1. We welcome feedback on any aspect of our work including complaints, comments, compliments and suggestions.
- 1.2. Whilst we always aim to get things right the first time, we know that occasionally we may not realise that ambition. We are positive about receiving complaints so that we have an opportunity to put things right where they have gone wrong.
- 1.3. We are a listening and learning organisation and want to ensure that all those we work with can help us to make improvements. We will use the outcome of complaints and any remedial action as a positive way of monitoring and improving performance.

## 2. Who can complain using this policy?

- 2.1. This policy is intended for members of the wider public, children and young people who use our services, our volunteers, partners and supporters and people we work with.
- 2.2. We will publicise this policy and related procedures through our website so that it is easily accessible for those who want to use it.
- 2.3. We will ensure that the policy is accessible and there is a 'child friendly' version with related procedures so that children and young people are able to use it effectively.

## 3. What can you complain about?

- 3.1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the work of The Children's Society.
- 3.2. We want to provide a fair, consistent and structured process to make sure that everyone we work with, and for, is able to get a response to their concerns.
- 3.3. If you are a young person in our care today and have concerns about your own safety or protection, we ask you to immediately alert us of this so you can get the support and help you need. You can do this by contacting the manager of the service you are receiving or by sending an email to [enq@childsoc.org.uk](mailto:enq@childsoc.org.uk) with your contact details. A member of our specialist team will contact you. If the complaint raises unaddressed safeguarding concerns, we will suspend the complaints process and deal with the safeguarding issues immediately.

#### 4. Who is not covered by the policy?

4.1. Staff (including secondees, consultants and contractors) with a complaint should follow the relevant process listed here, as appropriate:

- Line management grievance policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Child protection policy

4.2. Complaints from adults who were in the care of The Children's Society as children should follow this link <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/historical-abuse-complaints-policy>.

Visit [www.childrenssociety.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/our-apology](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/our-apology) to get in touch so a member of our specialist team can arrange to make contact in the first instance.

#### 5. Key principles for managing complaints

- 5.1. Children and young people who use our services, our volunteers, partners and supporters are treated with dignity and respect, are not afraid to make a complaint and have their concerns taken seriously.
- 5.2. Our policy and procedures will be clear and as accessible as possible so that the children and adults we work with and for, have a voice which can help us make improvements.
- 5.3. Concerns will be resolved swiftly and as far as possible informally by the people who provide the service locally, or who are responsible for the relevant area of work.
- 5.4. We will ensure there is a fair, clear and consistent process which sets out three stages for considering complaints, including an accurate and timely response.

#### 6. How to Complain

6.1. If you are child, young person or parent/ guardian involved in one of our services you can get in touch in the following ways:

**Email:** [nerys.anthony@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:nerys.anthony@childrenssociety.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0800 783 7173 (9-5pm weekdays)

**Text:** 07720 941 881 (we may not be able to respond to your query immediately)

**Write to:** Nerys Anthony, Edward Rudolf House, 69-85 Margery Street, London WC1X 0JL

- 6.2. If you are an adult who was cared for by The Children's Society as a child you can get in touch in the following ways:

**Email:** [enq@childsoc.org.uk](mailto:enq@childsoc.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0203 282 3725 (9-4pm weekdays)

**Write to:** PAC Team, Edward Rudolf House, 69- 85 Margery Street, London WC1X 0JL

- 6.3. If you are a member of the public or a supporter of The Children's Society and wish to make a complaint, you can get in touch in the following ways:

**Email:** [supportercare@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@childrenssociety.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 303 7000 (9-5pm weekdays)

**Write to:** Supporter Care, The Children's Society, Edward Rudolf House, 69-85 Margery St, London WC1X 0JL

## The Children's Society has a three stage complaints procedure

### 7. Stage 1 – Local Resolution

- 7.1. All complaints whether received in writing or verbally will be logged and monitored through a central register, held by the Company Secretariat Team.
- 7.2. Wherever possible complaints will be resolved swiftly and informally by the relevant team or staff who provide the service locally or the relevant area of work. We will log and learn from these complaints at a national level.
- 7.3. Where a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant within 24 hours, we will:

Within two working days

- a) acknowledge receipt of the complaint and send a copy of The Children's Society complaint leaflet to the complainant (adult/young person friendly version)

As soon as possible but always within five working days

- b) invite the complainant to discuss the complaint either face to face or by an appropriate means of communication

Within 10 working days

- c) Investigate the complaint and ensure the findings and conclusions of the responsible manager are sent to the complainant in writing
- d) details will be provided to the complainant of how to appeal if they are unhappy with the outcome

## 8. Stage 2 – Appeal

- 8.1. If the complainant remains dissatisfied they should put their reasons for dissatisfaction in writing, within five working days of receiving notification of the Stage 1 outcome.
- 8.2. Within three working days of the receipt of the appeal request:
  - a) the relevant Director will consider whether there is a basis for appeal and if a further review is required
  - b) if the relevant Director considers there is no basis for an appeal the decision and the reasoning behind it will be communicated to the complainant.
- 8.3. Within 10 working days of the receipt of the appeal request:
  - a) if the relevant Director accepts that there is a basis for appeal, a senior manager will be appointed to consider the appeal
  - b) the manager considering the appeal will invite the complainant to discuss the complaint either face to face or by telephone
  - c) following the discussion with the complainant, the manager considering the appeal will reach a conclusion based on what they have heard and after reviewing relevant documentation. The manager's conclusions will form the basis for the decision to reject the appeal and confirm the original decision or to uphold the appeal and suggest an appropriate course of action.
  - d) the manager's decision, including the findings and conclusions which led to that decision, will be provided to the complainant in writing
  - e) details will be provided to the complainant of how to make a final appeal if they are unhappy with the outcome
  - f) if you are a Children's Society supporter and, after four weeks from making an initial complaint, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may refer the complaint to the Fundraising Regulator <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/>

## 9. Stage 3 – Final Appeal to Chief Executive

- 9.1 If the complainant remains dissatisfied they should put their reasons for dissatisfaction in writing, within five days of receiving notification of the Stage 2 outcome.
- 9.2 Within 10 working days of the receipt of the appeal request:
  - a) the appeal will be considered by the Chief Executive or his / her delegated representative
  - b) where the complaint relates to the Chief Executive, a member of the Board of Trustees will be asked by the Chair of the Board to consider the appeal.
  - c) the final appeal stage will reconsider the original complaint and the way in which The Children's Society complaints policy and procedure was applied.

- d) the Chief Executive or his / her delegated representative considering the appeal will review all records relating to Stages 1 and 2 of the complaints process and may wish to meet with the complainant and any member of staff before reaching a decision.
- e) the outcome of the final appeal will be provided in writing to the complainant and may either uphold the decisions and actions taken or identify and offer to implement an alternative way of resolving matters.

## **10. Next Steps if the Complainant remains Dissatisfied**

- 10.1 After The Children's Society Complaints procedure is exhausted, complainants may refer their complaint to the following organisations as applicable:

The Charity Commission

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

## **11. Confidentiality, Monitoring and Learning from complaints**

- 11.1 We will keep your complaint confidential and only tell those involved in resolving your complaint about it.
- 11.2 After it is resolved we will keep a summary on record using Data Protection Act guidance.
- 11.3 The Board of Trustees will retain oversight of complaints.
- 11.4. The Children's Society's Executive Board and the Board of Trustees will regularly monitor the outcomes of complaints and ensure improvements are made where needed, based on those outcomes.

Policy owned by: Company Secretary

Policy agreed by: Executive Board

Policy to be reviewed: June 2018

