

	Policy Name: Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy
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Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Action for Children is committed to delivering an excellent service. We regard all feedback received as an opportunity to turn a negative experience into a positive one, as well as an opportunity to learn and to improve.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we:
- listen and are responsive to people who raise an issue with us.
 - consider and respond as swiftly as possible and at an appropriate level.
 - are fair and consistent.
 - offer solutions and/or explanations.
 - offer complainants recourse to someone more senior/more independent if they wish
 - ensure that staff who are mentioned in complaints receive appropriate support.
 - respect confidentiality.
 - record complaints consistently and monitor what we record.
 - use complaints positively as an opportunity for learning and improvement.
 - protect those raising a concern from victimisation and harassment.
- 1.3 Action for Children acknowledges that complainants want to have the issues they raise accepted as important, have their distress acknowledged and to be assured that the same thing will not happen again.

1.4 The charity aims to involve those raising a complaint in discussing their concerns and in finding resolution.

2. Who this Policy is for

2.1 The wide range of people who may wish to give feedback or make a complaint about Action for Children under this policy include:

- Children or young people or families that we are currently working with or their friends/relatives.
- Children or young people or families that we have previously worked with or their friends/relatives.
- Members of the public and supporters.
- Contractors, partner or other agencies, volunteers.
- Foster carers and supported lodging providers (once they have been approved).

2.2 The policy & related procedures are not for concerns raised by staff of Action for Children, including but not limited to those that are appropriately addressed via the [Grievance Policy](#) or the [Whistle-blowing Policy](#) or the [Allegations and Concerns Regarding Staff, Volunteers, Carers and Trustees](#) procedures.

2.3 This is an organisation-wide policy. For the avoidance of doubt, Action for Children policies are applied to all Action for Children Group entities (including but not limited to, Action for Children Services Limited and Action for Children Developments Limited). Therefore, any reference to Action for Children should be interpreted as a reference to the relevant Action for Children group entity that is the subject of the complaint being raised.

3. Compliments and Comments

3.1 Action for Children values compliments and when received they will be recorded and reported to ensure the positive feedback is shared and recognised across the organisation. Compliments enable Action for Children to understand where our services have made a positive impact to children and young people's lives.

- 3.2 All comments received are appreciated and useful to Action for Children, as they help us to understand the standards that need to be maintained and the areas that require further development.

4. Complaints

- 4.1 We value all comments about our work, and we regard complaints as a positive opportunity for listening, learning, and making improvements to our services. We therefore collect, record, and appropriately respond to any expressions of dissatisfaction, written or spoken, from anyone affected by our activities. To ensure this is done as efficiently as possible and the appropriate part of the policy is applied, **complaints** are defined as follows.

Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action where the complainant is unable to achieve satisfaction through discussion with Action for Children staff or representatives.

4.2 How to complain

- 4.2.1 Leaflets regarding how to make a complaint are displayed in service settings as well as on services social media.
- 4.2.2 Complaints and negative comments may be made verbally, in writing, or by electronic media e.g., email or via the Action for Children website. These can be received by Action for Children directly or from a third party.
- 4.2.3 Complaints received via the Action for Children website will be directed by the Ask Us service to the manager of the relevant service to action. Where a complaint appears to fall outside a relevant service area it should be referred to the relevant Action for Children Director for them to review and action accordingly.
- 4.2.4 Where a complaint involves a suggestion that a child or young person might not be adequately safeguarded, then the matter should be referred to the Safeguarding service in the first instance for consideration of next steps.

4.3 Complaints Process

- 4.3.1 Action for Children's complaints process is set out below and each stage includes controls to ensure that risks are assessed, handled by the most appropriate person and escalated where required.

Step 1 – Tell us

If you are unhappy about any of our services', we want to hear from you.

Please tell us about your complaint in any of the following ways:

- You can tell the service direct: ask to speak to the team leader or the manager, in person or by phone and they will be happy to arrange to meet you. If you would rather speak to someone not involved in running the service directly, please ask a staff member for the details of the next most senior manager.
- You can also contact us directly by phone, e-mail or writing to our Head office:

Phone: 0300 123 2112

Email: ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk

Post: Action for Children, 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 8AG

Step 2 – Acknowledgement

Where a complaint has been submitted, this will be reviewed and acknowledged within 7 working days of receipt.

Step 3 – We will respond to your complaint

We will determine the best way to look into your complaint. This is usually done by a manager or senior member of staff of the service concerned, but for serious complaints we may involve someone more senior straight away.

We will usually need to discuss your complaint with you so we are clear about the outcome you want.

We will aim to address your complaint within 15 working days, if this isn't possible, we will contact you to provide an explanation and indication of when a full response can be expected.

Step 4 – Appeal

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint, this can be appealed and escalated to senior management where a review of the complaint will be carried out. Any appeal must be in writing and made within 20 working days of the original outcome.

We aim to complete investigations within 25 working days of the start date.

Step 5 – If you remain dissatisfied

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you are entitled to raise the matter with the relevant statutory body.

5. Learning from Complaints

5.1 Complaints are a valuable source of learning and improvement; therefore, Action for Children ensures both compliance and good practice including:

1. Records are retained of complaints received, investigation outcomes and reasons for decisions.
2. Records of complaints are regularly reviewed in order to identify any trends, wider learning, what lessons can be learned and how Action for Children can improve its services and the experience of donors and children, young people and families using our services.
3. Reports are sent on an annual basis as a minimum to ELT and Board of Trustees on the number and nature of complaints received and the outcome of those complaints, including whether they have led to a change in services, policies, or procedures.