

CHILDREN'S COMPLAINT (INTERNAL) POLICY

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Board Member Signature	
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Policy	Children's Complaint (Internal) Policy
Purpose	To ensure that staff members understand their roles and responsibilities regarding complaints so that they are dealt with effectively.
Scope	All staff members
Policy / Regulations / Training Supported	Children's Homes Regulations 2015
Responsibilities	Staff members to take initial complaints Manager to investigate complaint and make recommendations
Enquiry Point	Head of Residential Services

DEFINITIONS

Complaint:

A statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Flow chart for managing complaints

Appendix 2 – Complaints monitoring form

Appendix 3 – Children's Complaint form

Appendix 4 – Managers monitoring form

POLICY STATEMENT

To ensure that the care provided to children is of the highest standard, it is important that children and those significant to them are able to comment on the care they receive. This is especially important when things go wrong.

POLICY

The complaints system may be used by anyone who has dealings with the organisation; this includes children, their families, social workers, other professionals or members of the public. It is important, especially with children who have come from neglected or abusive backgrounds where they have had little opportunity to voice their opinions to know that they have the right to complain about the care that they receive in the homes, and to have this taken seriously.

All complaints that are made must be dealt with as quickly as possible. This may be able to be managed by the staff members on duty or manager of the home, but in some occasions the investigation may have to be completed by someone external to the home or at times the organisation. All employees within Halliwell Homes are not permitted to encourage or for a child to be coerced into making a complaint, supportive measures should always be utilised such as taking the time to listen, respecting privacy and using the correct recording methods, ensuring the individual making the complaint is aware of how the structure works.

The complaint system comprises of three stages. **The first is an informal stage** where the complaint can be dealt with immediately by the person taking the complaint (this may include discussion with a more senior member of staff). Although this is the simplest of the stages, it remains important to ensure that the paperwork in relation to complaints is completed, as this allows managers to be able to potentially track patterns of smaller concerns that they can then devise strategies to reduce.

A complaint can be made in various forms, including verbal, written and by use of communication aids such as augmentative and alternative communication for example, Halliwell Homes will support each child individually. Once the child's account has been sought, a decision will be made by senior management within each home as to how the complaint shall be dealt with, followed by feedback to the child.

The second stage complaint should be used for any complaints that are unable to be resolved at stage one, as well as more serious complaints where the individual wishes to make the complaint 'official' or 'formal'. The complaint should be recorded on the complaints form (either

by the complainant or someone on their behalf) and then passed to the registered manager. Out of office hours consideration should be given to whether the on-call manager should be informed of the complaint. All complaints should be acknowledged to the complainant within three working days and the investigation and outcome relayed in writing within fifteen working days. If a complaint is lodged by a child at stage two or above, then they should be advised of their right to have an advocate to support them.

The child making the complaint no matter in which form, has the right to express their concern without prejudice, the registered person must ensure also that any person involved within the complaint takes any part in its consideration or investigation, except at the informal resolution stage if the registered person considers it appropriate.

The registered person must ensure that the records of the complaints are ascertained, inclusive of the relevant paperwork, if action is taken in response, ensure any outcomes of the investigation are documented clearly. Should any child make a complaint, the registered person must ensure that no child is subject to any reprisal for making such complaint or representation.

The third stage of the system relates to complaints where following stage two the complainant is still unhappy with the outcome. All appeals will be completed by a managing director, with the outcome of the appeal being relayed in writing within twenty working days of the appeal being lodged.

If a complaint is made regarding a senior member within the company then this must be dealt with by an internal professional in a senior position, should any complaint involve a director, then the investigation should be completed by someone external to the organisation

- **First stage** – Complaint received, resolution to be sought if possible and response given by the team member receiving the complaint, a senior manager may need to be consulted during this period. Feedback to be provided to the child and all relevant paperwork to be obtained, this can be used to track and reduce patterns of smaller concerns and devise strategies.
- **Second stage** – “Formal” or “Official” complaint, this is utilised when stage one is unable to resolve the issue raised by the child, or more serious complaints which are not able to be resolved at stage one. The complaint needs to be documented on Halliwell Homes complaints form, if the child is unable to verbally document their concerns, a suitable team member is to support them without prejudice. If the complaint is made out of hours, bear consideration to contacting on-call through the correct procedures. Complaints should be acknowledged to the complainant within three working days, followed by the investigation outcomes within fifteen working days. Any child making a complaint at Stage two or higher, has the right to be supported by an advocate to

support them in expressing their concerns. All relevant paperwork must be completed, and the home manager notified of the complaint at the earliest opportunity.

- **Third stage** – This stage can be utilised should the complainant feel the matter has not been resolved at stage two or remains unhappy. Should the complaint be made about a senior person in the company, this stage must be completed by an internal professional within the company who resides in a senior position. Should the complaint be about a director, the investigation should be completed by an external professional to the organisation.