



## **Aireborough Family Services**

Working together with children, young people and families

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# Policies and Procedure

# **Compliments and Complaints Handling Policy**



First Published: September 2013

Most Recent Review Date: September 2021

# **Aireborough Children's Services**

## **Compliments and Complaints Handling Policy**

### **1 Introduction**

Aireborough Children's Services prides itself on being a successful and highly regarded organisation that is committed to the quality of services it delivers with children, young people and their families to achieve better outcomes against the priorities set out in the Children and Young People's Plan, Cluster Action Plan and the vision of a Child Friendly City.

We strive to be a listening and learning organisation that maintains and improves the quality of service we offer by responding with appropriate action to compliments and complaints.

To protect and sustain the good reputation we have built with our service users, partners and stakeholders we have in-built quality assurance processes for all aspects of our work that includes:–

- Governance structures that require accountability and regular review of the services provided
- Regularly reviewed policies and procedures in line with Leeds City Council recommended best practice
- An agreed Cluster Action Plan with ongoing evaluation of all the work we do through performance measuring against clear targets set
- Feedback and review by those using our services to inform future planning and delivery
- Regular supervision, professional development, training and appraisal of all staff

This policy also reflects the underpinning principles that informs all of our provision:

- Safeguarding and working together
- Earliest intervention
- Think Family, Work Family approach
- Overcoming barriers to improve outcomes
- Restorative Practice
- Assessment based interventions and targeting of resources available
- Participation of children, young people and their families in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services.

## **2 Aims**

This policy is to ensure we make it easy for you to provide feedback to us, and use your feedback to improve our services.

Through our Compliments and Complaints Handling Policy, we aim to resolve your complaints sensitively, swiftly, effectively and fairly.

When dealing with complaints, it is our aim to resolve the complaint and leave you feeling that it was handled fairly and appropriately. The tone of our contact will be open, responsive and avoid unnecessary formality. Our written correspondence will use Plain English, and will be backed up with positive action to resolve your complaint.

We are committed to treating all our service users fairly and we take equality and diversity into account in a positive way. We will therefore ensure that individual needs are taken into account when applying this policy and that any reasonable adjustments are made as required.

Our information sheet for service users is called “How To Register a Complaint” and is available for all our service users. It is shown as Appendix 1 to this policy.

The sheet outlines the different ways you can compliment, complain or provide comments to us, along with details as to how long it will take us to respond. Sheets are given when we deliver any of our services; they are also available to download on our website, [www.aireboroughxs.co.uk](http://www.aireboroughxs.co.uk)

We do not require you to contact us in writing. All service user feedback will be treated equally whether it is by telephone, letter, face to face, email, social media, or any other communication.

Should you require information about compliments and complaints into a language other than English, this can be arranged by ringing 0113 222 4405 and confirming what language is required – this will provide you with the Leeds City Council “Let us Know” leaflet that will allow you to express a compliment or complaint via this route.

All staff appointed by Aireborough Family Services (AFS), including commissioned partners and members of the Joint Collaborative Committee (JCC), will receive a copy of this policy statement and will be familiar with AFS procedures for dealing with service users compliments and complaints, to which they will have access as required. The policy is available on request to service users.

Relevant staff and governors will receive training in handling service users compliments and complaints as appropriate. This may be on an individual basis, or as a group activity for all staff, or for specific groups, such as the office staff or members of the governing body.

As a partnership based organisation we are commissioned to undertake functions on behalf of Leeds City Council – Children’s Services as well as commission other partner, for example Northpoint Wellbeing to deliver services on our behalf. Where a compliment or complaint is against a commissioned aspect of our work we may direct

this to the relevant organisation to respond initially or follow the Leeds City Council processes with independent support from the relevant Service Delivery Manager. We would aim to ensure that this did not delay an appropriate response.

To ensure that our policy remains relevant at all times, we review it on a regular basis.

### **What is a compliment?**

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction about the standard of service we provide. We are always glad to hear from people who are satisfied with the services we offer. All compliments are recorded, acknowledged, and a copy is sent to the relevant service manager to provide feedback to the member of staff or service.

### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service we provide. Our staff are able to resolve most issues of dissatisfaction as part of their job, without the need for you to make a complaint. However there may be cases that require further investigation and the involvement of other managers and individuals to find out what went wrong. We will deal with these as complaints.

**We published this version of the policy in September 2013. This policy is reviewed periodically and was last reviewed in September 2021.**

### **3 How we implement the policy**

Aireborough Family Services has a three stage policy.

- Informal stage
- Stage 1
- Stage 2

#### **The informal stage**

Upon receipt of the complaint, our service will look at the issues contained within the complaint. We will look at whether we feel that there is the need for a full investigation or if we could resolve the issue for you quickly. If we think we can do so, we may contact you to discuss this with you with the hope of resolving your complaint. If we cannot, your complaint will be dealt with by proceeding to stage 1:-

#### **Stage 1**

Stage 1 of a complaint is the first formal stage and we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days. Our acknowledgement can be made verbally or in writing and will include:

- An initial contact regarding the issue that has caused you to complain
- Contact details for who will be dealing with your complaint
- A date or timeframe by which you can expect to receive a response

Our policy is to respond in full to you within fifteen working days of receipt of your complaint, wherever operationally possible. If we cannot respond in full within fifteen working days, we will provide you with regular updates at least every two weeks.

These will detail the reason for the delay and when you can expect to receive a response. Should it be required, the investigating officer may contact you for further information to assist with their investigation. Our response can be provided by letter, email, face to face or by telephone. Where a response is given by telephone or in person, we will offer to provide written confirmation of our discussion. As part of our stage 1 response, we will also advise you how you can take your complaint further should you wish to do so.

#### **Stage 2**

If you remain dissatisfied following our investigation at stage 1, you can ask for your complaint to be looked at again by a more senior officer, this will either be an appointed member of the Joint Collaborative Committee (JCC). This is the governance board to which all of our services are accountable and the appointed person will be of suitable seniority and experience to review the complaint alongside a small group of selected members of the JCC. Or it will be passed to the Service Delivery Manager within the Local Authority to manage your complaint at this level.

You will normally have 28 days from the date we responded to your initial complaint to take your complaint to stage 2, unless there are exceptional circumstances. At this stage we would ask you to provide details in writing to aid the new investigation, and let us know why you are still dissatisfied.

At stage 2 we will appoint a senior officer (as described above) to review your complaint. In exceptional circumstances, the investigating officer may be from another service if we feel an independent review is required. The complaint will be acknowledged in the same way as at stage 1.

At stage 2 we will look at how we dealt with your original complaint and we will also respond to any further related issues that you have raised with us. Our policy is to respond in full to you within 15 working days of receipt of your complaint, wherever possible. If we cannot respond in full within 15 working days, we will provide you with regular updates at least every two weeks. These will detail the reason for the delay and when you can expect to receive a response.

### **Next steps**

There is no further right of appeal to ourselves or the Council following completion of an investigation at stage 2 of this policy and regretfully, sometimes complaints are closed with a service user remaining dissatisfied, but we are confident that this is both unlikely and everything would be done to reach a resolution satisfactory to all parties.

Within our final response, we will inform you of your right to take your complaint further if you remain dissatisfied. Our response will contain the contact details for the Local Government Ombudsman's office.

## Appendix 1



# Aireborough Family Services How to Register a Complaint

### Initial Registration of a Complaint via the Informal stage

Initially, you should address your concerns directly to a member of staff either in person, by phone or in writing. In most instances, you will find the person you make contact with will be sympathetic and as anxious as you are to solve the problem.

### Formal Registration of a Complaint—Stage 1

However, if you are still not satisfied, or if the complaint is about a matter of policy, you can put your complaint in writing to the manager. You can do this by letter or by filling in a complaints form which you can get from the centre. Your complaint should be lodged as soon as possible but in any case no later than **three months** after the incident. You should get an acknowledgement of your complaint within **three working days**. The manager will make sure a full investigation is carried out and a full response will be sent within **15 working days**.

Note: if your complaint is about the manager, you should send your complaint to the chair of governors for the Cluster who will follow the same timescales for Stage 1.

### Formal Registration of a Complaint—Stage 2

If you are still not satisfied after Stage 1, you can address your complaints to the governing body. This must be done in writing within **ten working days** of getting the response from the manager or chair of governors. A panel, made up of at least three governors with no previous knowledge of or involvement in the case, will be convened within **20 working days**. The panel **will not hear the case again**. Instead, they will carry out a review of the investigation to make sure it has been carried out fairly and the correct procedure has been followed. The panel will tell you and the Manager what they have decided within **three working days**.

### Leeds Children's Services Review

If you believe that the matter has not been dealt with fairly you can ask Leeds Children's Services to examine the process that has been followed. Leeds Children's Services will appoint an investigating officer who will check that:

- reasonable procedures have been followed;
- that the person making the complaint has been treated fairly;
- and that there has been no breach of statutory regulations.

Leeds Children's Services does not have the power to set aside the decision of the governors' panel. It can only comment on the fairness of the process.

### Local Government Ombudsman

If you feel that Leeds Children's Services has not followed the process correctly, you can take your complaint to the local government ombudsman.

Finally, a further stage of appeal can be taken to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, but only on the grounds that the governing body or Leeds Children's Services is acting or proposing to act unreasonably or illegally.

<b>Contact Details:</b>	Aireborough Family Services Manager Albion House Rawdon Park Yeadon LS19 7XX <a href="mailto:simon.toyne@aireboroughfamily.co.uk">simon.toyne@aireboroughfamily.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.aireboroughfamily.co.uk">www.aireboroughfamily.co.uk</a>	Chair of Governors (AFS) via N Renouccie <a href="mailto:RenouccN1@guiseleyschool.org.uk">RenouccN1@guiseleyschool.org.uk</a> (PA to Chair) c/o Guiseley High School Fieldhead Road Guiseley Leeds LS20 8DT	Leeds Children's Services Customer Relations PO Box 837 Leeds LS1 9PZ Tel: 0113 378 5111 Email: <a href="mailto:complaints.children@leeds.gov.uk">complaints.children@leeds.gov.uk</a>	Local Government Ombudsman PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 0EH Tel : 0300 061 0645 Email : <a href="mailto:advice@lgo.org.uk">advice@lgo.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint">https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint</a>
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**Working  
Together with  
Children, Young  
People and  
Families**

**Appendix 2**

**AIREBOROUGH CLUSTER COMPLAINTS RECORDING FORM**

**Complaints / feedback form**

Personal Details .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Postcode .....

Daytime telephone number  
.....

Evening telephone number.....

If applicable, name of child(ren) and year at centre  
.....

Your relationship to the service e.g. parent, carer, neighbour, member of the public,  
student.  
.....

Please give details of your complaint:  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? Who did  
you speak to, when and what was the response?

.....  
.....  
.....

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Signature .....

Date .....

**Official Use:**

Date of acknowledgement .....

By whom .....

Complaint referred to .....

Date .....

You can register your complaint by sending this form to:

Simon Toyne – Integrated Services Leader  
c/o Aireborough Children’s Services  
Albion House  
Rawdon Park, Rawdon  
LS19 7XX

Alternatively you can telephone your complaint on: 0113 3782112

Email: [simon.toyne@aireboroughxs.co.uk](mailto:simon.toyne@aireboroughxs.co.uk)

If the complaint concerns the Integrated Services Leader and/or you do not wish to send your complaint to Simon Toyne you can contact either Paul Clayton – Cluster Chair on 01943 872315 or LCC Customer Relations on [complaints.children@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.children@leeds.gov.uk)