

Complaints Policy

Introduction

Children Heard and Seen believes that effective investigation of complaints and learning from these are an important part of achieving high quality work. Children Heard and Seen is committed to ensuring our work is of the highest quality and is constantly striving for excellence.

This policy sets out our procedures for the investigation and resolution of complaints.

Definition of a complaint

Children Heard and Seen welcomes comments and suggestions on how we can improve our services on a regular basis in the form of feedback gathered from young people, parents and professionals at the end of interventions. Whilst these can be critical of our work these would not usually be considered a complaint, unless the person providing the feedback indicated they wanted it to be treated as such.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of Children Heard and Seen's work.

Who is this policy for?

A complaint can be verbal or written and can be from groups, organisations or individuals. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, students on placement, volunteers or trustees who should refer to Children Heard and Seen's internal policy. Where an agency wants to make a complaint, this should come from a member of senior management, or be agreed to, and signed off by them.

Young People who wish to make a complaint

Children Heard and Seen have simplified information available on how to raise concerns or complaints if required-this is in the form of a leaflet which will be given to all young people at the start of an intervention. This leaflet can also be found on our website. Children Heard And Seen understand that young people or adults may wish to have an advocate to support them in raising a concern or making a complaint.

Children Heard and Seen's process for dealing with complaints

Stage 1 – concerns

Often, it is most appropriate for concerns to be dealt with informally by Team Leaders and our front-line staff. This is the most appropriate route for the majority of concerns that do not indicate serious misconduct and where the complainant agrees.

Anyone raising a concern in this way should be encouraged to speak openly about their concerns and be reassured that their concerns will be treated with appropriate confidence, will be taken seriously and will not affect their intervention or any other service being provided by us. Staff responding to an informal concern should offer an apology or explanation as appropriate and inform the complainant of any remedial action that will be taken.

To raise a concern- complainants should speak to or email the individual concerned or their line manager (usually a Team Leader). Any member of staff, volunteer, student on placement should give their name and their line manager's name if asked. Complaints should be asked the specifics of their concern and the desired outcome.

Stage 2 – formal

If a complainant feels the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, or wishes their complaint to be formally investigated they can make a formal complaint. Complainants can outline the details of their complaint by email and send it to info@childrenheardandseen.co.uk or in writing and post it to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Children Heard and Seen, 160 Divinity Road, Oxford, OX4 1LR. Complainants are asked to use the 'Complaints Reporting Template' (Word version available on our website or on request) to structure their complaint. If a complainant prefers to make their complaint verbally, this can be taken by any member of staff at Team Leader level or above using the Complaints Reporting Template at the end of this policy. If the complaint is about the CEO then it should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees.

It is Children Heard and Seen's policy that the complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of it being received in writing (by email or post) and will contain the following information:

- Name, email, address and telephone number of the person who will investigate the complaint.
- The date the investigation will begin.
- If the complaint has been made verbally a copy of the completed template will be attached.
- Children Heard And Seen aim to offer a full response within 20 working days of the acknowledgement of complaint. Where this is not possible we will write to the complainants and inform them of the delay and give another date. Where the complaint involves another organisation e.g. a school more time may be required (for example to allow for school holidays). Children Heard And Seen may offer a face-to-face meeting to explain the outcome of the investigation in more detail.

Stage 3 – appeal

If a complainant is not satisfied with the response to their complaint they can outline the reasons for their dissatisfaction in writing by email and send it to complaints@one-eighty.org.uk or in writing and post it to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Children Heard And Seen, Unit 20, Kings Meadow, Ferry Hinksey Road, Oxford, OX2 0DP. If the complaint was concerning the CEO then it should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees.

The appeal will then be investigated at Board Level. The appeal should be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt which will detail who will deal with the appeal and when the complainant can expect a reply. In dealing with the appeal, Board members will read over any necessary documentation, speak with relevant individuals involved with the complaint then make a final decision. The complainant should receive a written response within 30 working days of the receiving the appeal which will include:

- Details of the final decision made and the reason for the decision
- The action that will be taken e.g. apology if appropriate, changes the organisation will make to prevent reoccurrence

If a complainant is still dissatisfied, they can contact the Charity Commission who may be able to assist them.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission#org-contacts>

Social Media

Social Media may be used to make a complaint or comment about Children Heard And Seen. In these instances, these should be flagged to a Team Leader (or a more senior member of staff) immediately so the issue can be resolved and responded to as soon as possible. Generally, complaints or comments made on social media should be responded to much more quickly than the time frames set out in this policy. If necessary complainants can be directed to use the processes set out in this policy to make a formal complaint.

Learning from complaints

Children Heard and Seen reviews complaints on a yearly basis to identify any trends, which may indicate the need for further action.

Last reviewed 6th September 2024

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Complaints Reporting Template

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| Name of complainant: | |
| Address of complainant: | |
| Email address of complainant: | |
| Telephone number of complainant: | |
| Date of receiving complaint: | |
| Name of staff taking the complaint (if applicable): | |

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| Complainants concerns |
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| Details of complaint – include as much detail as possible |
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| Complainants desired outcome |
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