

Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Families Empowered Complaints Policy sets out our values and commitment to providing an excellent standard of service for individuals and organisations. The Families Empowered Complaints Procedure sets out the step-by-step guide to making a complaint. We also have a child-friendly complaints procedure set out in our Children's Guide.

Introduction

Families Empowered welcomes all feedback, both positive and negative, on all aspects of our service. Feedback provides valuable information and evaluation of a client's experience of working with us which will help us to know what we are doing well, learn from mistakes and use the voice of those using the service to undertake meaningful development, improvement and change. However, any allegation or concern of a safeguarding nature against anyone working for Families Empowered in any capacity will be managed under our safeguarding policy and procedure.

Principles of Good Practice

Families Empowered aims to operate within the principles of good practice to:

- Be client focused
- Deliver excellent service
- Be honest, open and accountable
- Act fairly and proportionately
- Address complaints promptly
- Strive for continuous improvement and development

Objectives of the Complaints Policy and Procedure

Families Empowered believes that when a client raises a concern or a complaint, they should feel that it will be taken seriously, that they will be listened to, their distress acknowledged and that we will work with them to reach a solution or provide a clear explanation. Therefore, Families Empowered will:

- Listen carefully and acknowledge all concerns and complaints and treat them confidentially where possible
- Investigate a concern or complaint fully, fairly and objectively
- Give clear timeframes
- Notify a complainant of the results of a complaint
- Inform a complainant of any actions to be implemented by Families Empowered
- Maintain a written record of all complaints, for a minimum of 3 years
- Store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the Privacy Policy
- Use concerns and complaints to improve services through action, training and development
- Review on an annual basis the number of concerns and complaints received, the outcomes, any actions taken and learning outcomes

Therefore, it is therefore essential that every client using the Families Empowered service has information about:

- How to raise a concern or make a complaint
- The process through which a complaint will be handled
- The timeframes for communication and outcome of a complaint
- Confidentiality, fairness and sensitivity

Definitions

Concern

A concern is experience of doubt or worry about an aspect of the service received. It may be appropriate to manage concerns under the Complaints Procedure.

Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of the service received, for example that the organisation has:

- Not provided a service or an acceptable standard of service
- Made an error in the way the service was provided
- Acted or communicated in an improper way
- Provided a service not based on the principles of fairness, equality and justice

Families Empowered takes complaints about our service seriously and will aim to resolve them quickly, efficiently, respectfully and where possible confidentially.

Informal Complaints – Stage 1

Families Empowered acknowledges that those in receipt of our services may wish to express concerns without having this framed as a complaint, or may have a complaint which can be quickly and satisfactorily addressed without recourse to the formal complaints procedure. When a concern or complaint is raised we will first work to try to resolve the matter satisfactorily at Stage 1.

Formal Complaints – Stages 2 and 3

If a complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily at Stage 1, then it should progress to Stage 2 as a formal complaint, which will be completed by the Director/ Registered Manager.

Stage 3 is the final stage of our complaint process and is undertaken by an independent investigator. If a complaint remains unresolved at the end of Stage 3, we will talk to the complainant about other routes they wish to take.

Complaints against the Director or Registered Manager

Families Empowered is registered with Ofsted, the regulatory body for Adoption Support Agencies. As part of our registration, we have a Responsible Individual and Registered Manager who have responsibility for the organisation.

The Director of Families Empowered, Deborah Sharratt, is currently the Responsible Individual but is in process of applying to Ofsted as Registered Manager and a new Responsible Individual will be appointed.

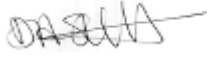
If a complaint is received against the Registered Manager, the Responsible Individual will manage the complaint at Stage 2 and an independent investigator will be appointed at Stage 3. If the complaint is about the Responsible Individual, an independent investigator will be appointed by the Registered Manager at Stage 2.

The Procedure – How to Complain

Families Empowered Complaints Procedure is set out below and provides a detailed step-by-step procedure. There is also a child friendly version available in our Children's Guide.

Monitoring, Review and Revision

This policy statement came into force on 11th August 2020. Families Empowered are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Signed 

Date 11th August 2020

Version	Review Date	Reviewer	Reason for Revision
2	9/8/2021	WE	Review and update of policy & procedure
3	25/3/2022	WE	Update of Policy & Procedure to ensure compliance with Regulations and Standards
4	1/4/2022	WE	Update policy & Procedure to reflect Ofsted Registration
5	13/6/23	WE	Change of registered address
6	12/4/24	WE	Staff update

Families Empowered Complaints Procedure

This procedure sets out to give clear information about the Families Empowered process and response should a complaint be raised about any aspect of our services.

If you are concerned about any aspect of the service you have received from us, we want you to tell us; we take all concerns and complaints seriously and welcome the opportunity to make improvements to our service.

Stage One – Informal Complaint

If we are aware of a concern or complaint at an early stage we can work with you in order to try to resolve matters quickly, for example to offer an apology, an acceptable explanation or a change in the way we work with you. To help us do this:

- Please tell us about your concern or complaint by speaking, texting, emailing or writing to us. If appropriate and following the consideration of the Director/Registered Manager, it is usually best if you can talk to the person you are working with about your complaint, although you can speak to a manager if you prefer and you will find their contact details later in this document.
- We will aim to resolve things immediately if we can, but if this is not possible, we will arrange to talk or meet with you as soon as possible to find a solution which is acceptable to you. We will aim to contact you within 3 working days to do this.
- If after speaking with us you are happy that your concern or complaint has been resolved to your satisfaction, we will acknowledge this in writing, including any actions taken, within 3 working days.
- All concerns and complaints raised will be kept confidential and stored appropriately for a minimum of 3 years
- Stage One complaints will be used for learning and service improvement, which may include staff training and development. Where this happens no information which may identify you will be used.

We hope that we can work with you in this way to resolve your concern about our service. However, if you are unhappy with the outcome or wish to make a formal complaint, you can ask for your complaint to progress to Stage Two.

Stage Two – Formal Complaint

Where a complaint progresses to Stage Two, the following procedure will take place:

- You will be invited to make a formal complaint in writing using our Complaints Form - which is at the end of this document. Alternatively, you can write to us or email us at:
 - Address: Unit 1C, The Gattinetts, Hadleigh Road, East Bergholt, Essex, CO7 6QT

- E-mail us at info@familiesempowered.co.uk.
- A formal complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days of it being received and this will tell you who is managing the complaint
- The person who the complaint is about will not take any part in the management of the complaint.
- Your complaint will be fully investigated by the Director, Registered Manager or Responsible Individual of Families Empowered.
- If the complaint is about the Director / Registered Manager, it will be managed by the Responsible Individual. If the complaint is about the Responsible Individual the complaint will move directly to Stage 3 and an independent investigator will be appointed.
- The investigation will involve gathering information to inform the investigation, including the child's view if appropriate. We may request to meet with you as part of the investigation, as well as consulting with staff and referring agencies.
- You will receive a full written response to your complaint within 28 working days of the date of the acknowledgement of the complaint being received. Your commissioning Agency, where involved, will also be sent a copy of the report.
- Where the complaint is complex or involves a person who is not easily available, we will contact you to agree to an extension to the timescale for response.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome of your Complaint, you have the right to request that your complaint be progressed to Stage Three. You have 20 working days to do this.

Stage Three – Independent Investigation

Where a complaint progresses to Stage 3, the following procedure will take place:

- Your request for a complaint to be progressed to Stage Three will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days of it being received. The Director may contact you to ask if you would be willing to have a further meeting or telephone call to discuss the outstanding issues to see what measures you would need to see happen for a resolution to be reached. If a resolution can be reached we will write to you to acknowledge this within 3 days of the resolution being reached.
- If no resolution can be reached, the Director will appoint an independent person to carry out a further investigation and you will be given the name and contact details for the Independent Investigator.
- If the complaint is about the Director, an independent investigator will have been appointed at Stage 2.
- The person who the complaint is about will not take any part in the management of the complaint.
- The Independent investigator will look at the original complaint, review all the information gathered to inform the Stage Two outcome and contact those involved again to carry out the further investigation.
- The independent investigator will write a report on completion of the investigation, including recommendations for any actions needed, which will be sent to the Director within 28 days of the Stage Three request being acknowledged.
- Following receipt of the report from the Independent Investigation, the Director will respond to you in writing, enclosing a copy of the report within 3 working days of it being received.
- Where the complaint is complex or involves a person who is not easily available, the Director will contact you to agree to an extension to the timescale for response.

Our Contact Details

Contact details for the Registered Provider and Director (in application for Registered Manager with Ofsted, at which point a new Responsible Individual will also apply):

Name and Role: Deborah Sharratt, Director and current Responsible Individual
Phone number: 07917 440683
Address: Unit 1C, The Gattinets, Hadleigh Road, East Bergholt, Essex, CO7 6QT
Email: deborah@familieempowered.co.uk

Registration & Regulatory Compliance

If you are not satisfied with our response after you have followed the complaints procedure, you can contact your commissioning Agency or Ofsted. We are registered as an Adoption Support Agency with Ofsted and our Registration Number is 2664647. Ofsted's contact details are:

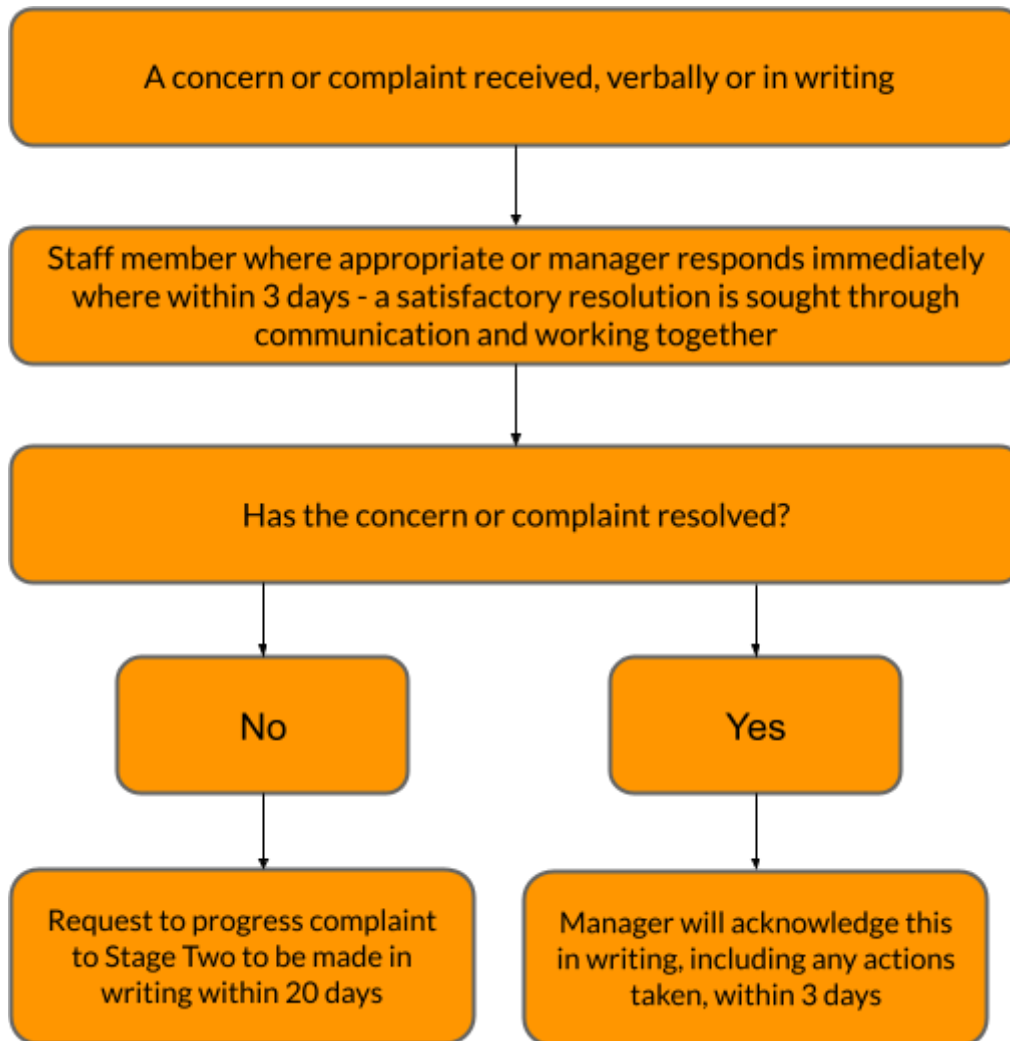
Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Telephone: 0300 123 1231
Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Whilst Ofsted cannot investigate individual concerns they will use the information as part of the inspection process and may also pass the information to, or advise you to contact, another organisation. Further information can be accessed via the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-about-childrens-social-care-services-to-ofsted/sharing-concerns-and-information-with-ofsted-about-childrens-social-care-services>

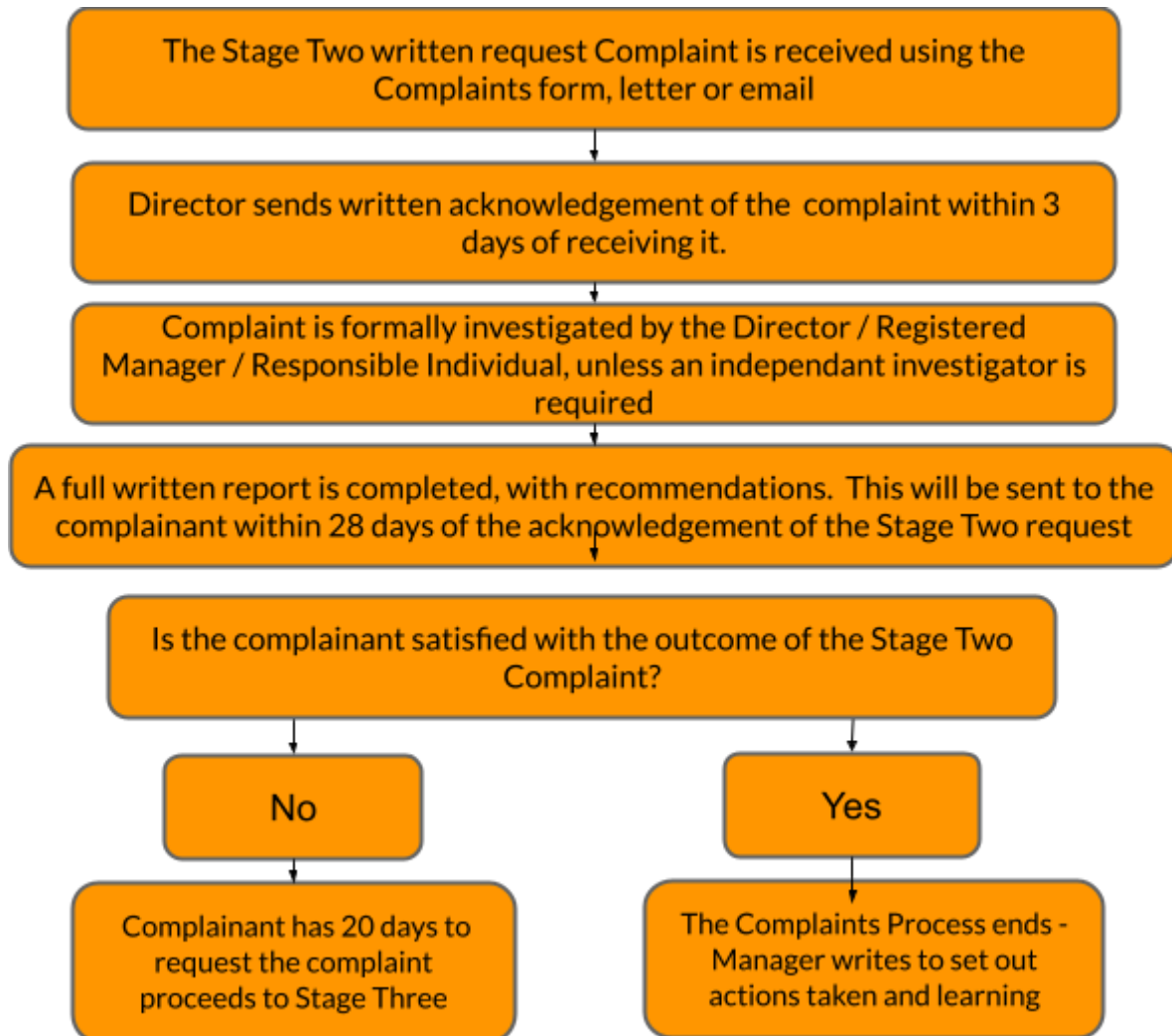
Children Who Want to Make a Complaint

We have child-friendly versions of our Complaints Policy and Procedure in our Children's Guides to support any child who wants to make a complaint about the service they have received from us. Children may need help to complain from a parent/carer/guardian, who could also contact the Authority or Agency commissioning our services. A child may also benefit from referral to advocacy services.

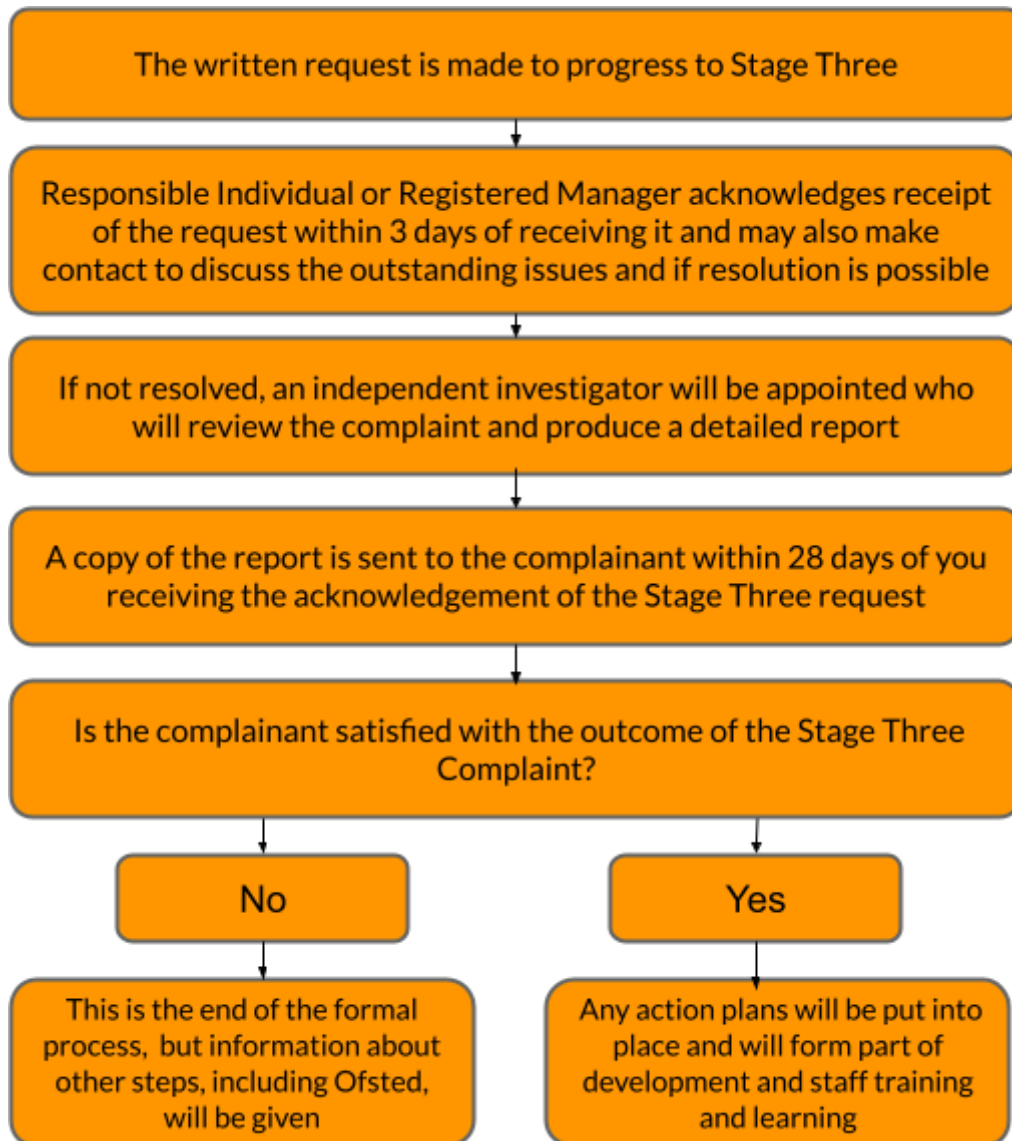
Flowchart for Stage One – Informal Complaints



Flowchart for Stage Two – Formal Complaints



Flowchart for Stage Three – Independent Investigation



Families Empowered Complaints Form

Your details

Name	
Address with postcode	
Telephone	
Email	
Any additional needs to be considered	

Details of the complaint

Please give us as much detail as possible, including dates & times and the names of those involved:

What outcome would you like

Please tell us what would need to happen to resolve the complaint:

Signature

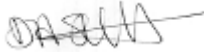
Signed	
Print Name	
Dated	

Please send your completed form to The Director at Unit 1C, The Gattinetts, Hadleigh Road, East Bergholt, Essex, CO7 6QT or you can email it to info@familiesempowered.co.uk.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your complaint within 3 working days and a full written response will be sent to you within 28 working days of the date of the acknowledgement of your complaint.

This policy statement came into force on 10 July 2020.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Signed 

Version	Reason for Revision	Reviewer	Date
1	Annual Review	Wendy Edgell	1 July 21
1	Annual Review- No change	Tara Davey	15 July22
1	Annual Review`	Wendy Edgell	15/723
2	Review - staff update	WE	12.4.24