

Complaints and Compliments about Together Trust (Public and Service Users other than Young People) Procedure

PUBLIC STATEMENT PUBLISHED ON THE TOGETHER TRUST WEB SITE:

POLICY

The Together Trust aims to provide services of the highest quality. In order to improve service delivery we deal with public and service user² compliments and complaints according to the procedure (detailed below).

You can make your compliment or complaint by email, telephone, or in writing by contacting the appropriate Service/Department or Chief Executive's Office direct at the Together Trust, The Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle SK8 1JE. Telephone 0161 283 4848, or email: ceoffice@togethertrust.org.uk

A complaint must be made no later than 12 months after:

- the date the event occurred or if later
- the date the event came to the notice of the complainant

The time limit will not apply if the Together Trust is satisfied that

- the complainant can give good reason for not making the complaint within that time limit, and
- despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly
- anonymous complaints will not be formally logged as a complaint unless there are presenting safeguarding concerns.

If you need an interpreter or sign language interpreter, we can arrange this for you. We usually need 7 days' notice to arrange this. This procedure can be made available on request in other formats such as cassette or Braille.

PROCEDURE

Complaints - What happens next?

- Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 3 service working days.
- You will be advised of the name and telephone number of the person dealing with the complaint.
- We will respond to your complaint in writing within 20 service working days (14 service working days for young people's complaints). If we cannot give a complete answer, we will tell you what we are doing to investigate your complaint and how long we expect it to take.
- If your complaint is in connection with a school or college operated by the Together Trust, please contact the appropriate Head of Service in the first instance. Education services operated by the Trust have their own procedures for dealing with complaints. Copies of these procedures can be provided if required.
- At any stage of the process, if you would like to meet with us, you have the right to be accompanied by an adult.

² In accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011, National Minimum Standards, and based on the documents, Getting the Best from Complaints - social care complaints and Representation for children, young people and others (1989 Children Act), the Together Trust has developed separate written procedures for considering any complaint or representation made by (1) young people receiving a Together Trust service or (2) foster carers employed by the Together Trust. For copies of these policies please contact the Together Trust. The Trust recognises the guidance set out in Clause 5.9 in the Welsh Assembly Government's documentation 'Listening and Learning'.

There are specific procedures for schools and Bridge College. Copies of their complaints procedures can be obtained from the relevant school or college office or from the Chief Executive's office at the Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 1JE, telephone: 0161 283 4848

Each time a formal complaint or comment is made in writing, it is logged on a record sheet into the following systems and processes:

- Annual business planning, particularly in terms of:
 - Identifying and prioritising changes and improvements to existing services
 - Identifying gaps in service provision
 - Service reviews (timing will be dependent on the cycle of review)
 - Review of policies and procedures

The results of the complaints record are presented to the Service Director regularly and as a standing item as part of the Chief Executive's Report at each Board meeting.

Should you wish to withdraw your complaint this can be done verbally, by email or in writing at any time and the Together Trust will acknowledge your withdrawal in writing.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you can write to the Chief Executive who may commission an independent investigation following which you will be advised of his decision in writing. If you still remain unsatisfied you have the right for your complaint to be heard by a panel within 20 working days of the date of the Chief Executive's written outcome. A Chairperson, who may also be a Trustee of the charity, will be nominated to co-ordinate this process. The panel will include the Chairperson and at least one senior member of staff. The Trust reserves the right to nominate an independent professional advisor as a member of the panel if required. At any stage of the process, if you would like to meet with us, you have the right to be accompanied by an adult.

Following the hearing, the Chairperson will respond to the complainant in writing without unreasonable delay but within 10 working days of the meeting.

Data Protection statement

The information that you provide to us will be used solely for the purpose of collecting compliments or responding to suggestions and complaints, and will not be passed on to any third parties. It will be retained for a maximum period of 2 years.

SUGGESTIONS TO HELP IMPROVE OUR SERVICES

You can make your suggestion by email, telephone, or in writing by contacting the appropriate Service/Department or Chief Executive's Office direct.

This guidance is also published in Welsh and is available at www.togethertrust.org.uk

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