

Solihull Family Information Service

Complaints Procedure

There are three parts to this complaints procedure. Part one outlines the procedures for dealing with complaints about childcare provision or services. Part two concerns complaints made about the Family Information Service. Part three relates to concerns that relate to safeguarding. A copy of all complaints and concerns recorded must be kept in the central complaints file, which must be kept in a secure place to comply with the Data Protection Act.

All complaints will be monitored.

Part One

Complaints about childcare provision or other services

The FIS does not register, monitor or inspect local provision or services. However, it is likely that the service will receive complaints or concerns from users of these services. These may cover issues such as:

- staffing ratios
- standards of care or education
- the condition of the premises
- unregistered provision

All complaints should be listened to and dealt with sympathetically but opinions must not be offered and staff must remain impartial at all times.

A. Procedure for complaints about childcare provision that is (or is required to be) registered by Ofsted

- The registration and inspection of childcare provision is the duty of Ofsted. Where appropriate this should be explained to the complainant.
- The complainant should be directed to the registered childcare provider, who has a **legal duty** to investigate complaints made about their provision. The provider should investigate the complaint, and the complainant should be notified of the outcome within 28 days.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they should be directed to the Ofsted Complaints Helpline Number – **0300 123 4666 unless the complaint is of a financial or contractual nature.**
- If the complainant feels unable to approach the provider about the complaint, they should be directed to the Ofsted Complaints Number **unless the complaint is of a financial or contractual nature.** The complainant should be encouraged to put the complaint in writing. (Ofsted will not disclose the identity of a complainant to the provider).

- If the complainant feels unable to speak to either the provider or Ofsted, the FIS staff member should take the details of the caller, including a telephone number, and write a brief summary of the complaint. This must then be sent by email to the complaints team **enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk**. Ofsted should be contacted to ensure that the email has been received. The complainant should be told that this is going to happen and that Ofsted will contact them directly. Ensure that permission is obtained to pass personal details to Ofsted re Data Protection Act.
- If the complainant wishes to remain anonymous and does not want to telephone Ofsted, as many details must be taken as possible and then the procedure as above must be followed.
- If the complaint is of a financial or contractual nature, and the outcome of the provider's investigation is unsatisfactory to the complainant, the complainant should be directed to the appropriate Development Officer.
- Where the complaint is about a provider that is not registered but required to be so, as many details as possible should be emailed to Ofsted using the above procedure.
- You must ask for permission from the enquirer to log the complaint and to pass their details on as appropriate.
- The appropriate Development Officer should be notified of all complaints.
- If the complainant has already complained to the childcare provider in writing and is not satisfied with the outcome they must send copies of any written correspondence to Ofsted at the address below:

Ofsted

Ofsted National Business Unit
 Royal Exchange Building
 St Anne's Square
 Manchester M2 7LA

If the complaint concerns the welfare of a child please follow the procedure in Part 4.

B. Procedure for complaints about schools

The process for parents who have concerns about schools is to speak to the school in the first instance. All schools must have a Complaints procedure and the parent can ask to see a copy of this. This will explain the process of making and continuing with a complaint if initial concerns are not resolved.

Further advice and guidance about the school's Complaints Procedure can be obtained by contacting the School Improvement and Advisory Service on 0121 704 8536.

If the complaint concerns the welfare of a child please follow the procedure in Part 4.

C. Procedure for complaints about provision that is exempt from registration (e.g. parent and toddler groups, holiday activities, childminders caring for children over the age of eight, nannies, activity clubs).

Complainants should be informed that in the case of provision that is exempt from registration it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child is cared for in a safe and suitable environment. In most cases the complaint must be raised between the complainant and the provider themselves. All enquirers will have been given a copy of the *Choosing Safe Activities Fact Sheet* to help them to know how to choose an activity for their child – this can be sent to the complainant for future reference.

If the complaint concerns the welfare of a child please follow the procedure in Part 4.

D. Procedure for complaints about Early Education Funding

Full details of the complaint should be recorded as per the Solihull Council complaints procedure and the complainant informed that the matter will be investigated. This may involve discussion with the provider to ensure that the correct entitlement has been given and the amount of funding claimed by the provider has been passed to the parent in the form of a free place. It may also require liaison with the EEF admin team. On resolution of the query, the FIS should report back to the complainant any details specific to their case. FIS have contact with the parent throughout this process and the EEF Admin team liaise with the provider to resolve the issue.

Part Two

Complaints about Family Information Service or other services and activities run by the council.

Please refer to the Council's Complaints Procedure which is available at <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/democracy/complaints.htm>

Part Three

Complaints relating to Sufficiency of Childcare and Highlighting Gaps

Any gaps highlighted through a brokerage enquiry taken within FIS should be logged on the Issues Log and Rosie Bunten FIS Manager notified. The Issues Log will be discussed at FIO/PC meetings on a monthly basis and any appropriate issues will be fed into the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. If the enquirer wishes to make a complaint regarding the gap they need to be signposted to their local Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Part Four
Safeguarding Children (Also see FIS Safeguarding Procedure)

If the complaint concerns the welfare of a child or children or where children are thought to be at risk, you should advise the complainant to contact the Duty Assessment and Referral Team (DART) **0121 788 4333** (available during office hours only). The FIO must contact the DART team after 2hrs to check if the complainant has called them and logged their concerns. If DART have no record of a call it is the duty of the FIS to report the concerns to them for advice and make a referral to DART using the referral form if advised.

The complaint will be assessed and appropriate advice given by trained professionals. If the complainant is not able or willing to contact the DART team, the FIS officer should record details of the complaint using the DART referral form available at <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Attachments/lscbinteragencyreferralpdf.pdf> This should be faxed through to the DART Team immediately on 0121 788 4394. The complainant should be told that these details are going to be passed on. A copy of the referral form must be kept in the central complaints file in FIS.

The Emergency Duty Team can be contacted in an emergency out of hours on **0121 605 6060**. If there is concern that a child is at immediate risk the complainant should be advised to call **999**.

For detailed steps regarding safeguarding please see FIS Safeguarding procedure

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