



DAME HANNAH ROGERS CHARITY

COMPLAINTS POLICY
May 2017

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Introduction

Dame Hannah Rogers's Charity supports young people in different ways. The children's Home is an environment where we support children, young people and families alike, to develop grow and achieve to their own full potential.

We see complaints as an important way of learning and improving what we do.

Our Complaints policy explains how concerns and formal complaints about our Children's Home, and the work of our staff will be addressed. It also details how to complain, and how we use your feedback to identify what we need to do to improve and develop within the Children's Home.

This policy will explain how we intend to manage any complaint made to the Children's Home and the time scales that you can expect us to work within.

We encourage open communication and would like you to let us know about any problems you encounter as soon as possible. By working together, we can help to ensure that our services are meeting your needs, and more importantly the needs of the child or young person.

We aim for our procedures to be open, clear and complaints to be managed within a set timeframe, handled consistently and fairly, in line with our policy.

Complaints

Complaints, suggestions and grumbles are encouraged, we see this as a way of the home being aware of any dissatisfaction with the quality of service provided.

All complaints are

- Taken seriously.
- Fully investigated.
- Handled quickly sympathetically and confidentially.
- Where necessary improvements made.

Our aim is to deal with complaints efficiently and fairly and, wherever possible to achieve a resolution which is satisfactory to both the complainant and the Charity.

Overarching the process is a culture in which the young people's voices is heard, they will be supported to express their views and choices.

This requires an open and transparent approach, with issues often dealt with at the "grumbles" stage.

The Charity recognises that a clear structure must include the relevant appeals process, and that all complaints will be recorded in writing, and if appropriate the outcome shared with the requisite authorities e.g. Ofsted.

Promotion of the policy

All children, young people and families will receive a copy of the policy on admission.

This is available in an easy read version if required.

We are aware that some children and young people may experience difficulties in making a complaint. Support is given to children and young people who have these types of difficulties via the SALT team, to allow an independent voice.

Alternative external support can be arranged through an advocacy service.

The key principles of the formal complaints process for complainant

- The complaints procedure should be clear and easy to use
- It should ensure that all people who access the Children's Home (Hannah's Avenue) or DHTC are treated with dignity and respect, they should not be afraid to make a complaint, or have their concerns taken seriously
- Impartial handling of all complaints
- Complaints should be resolved swiftly and satisfactorily
- Adequate support for everyone involved in the complaint to allow a fair process.
- Ensure that the child or young person receives a full response without delay
- Safeguard the child or young person's rights of access to other means of support, such as the Local Government Ombudsman
- Once the complaint is resolved or settled in relation to any aspects related to the Children's Home (Hannah avenue) or DHRC, we monitor performance, deliver what has been set out of as an outcome, learn from the complaints, and use this learning to improve services for everyone.

How to complain

We welcome all complaints in any format from anybody. Complaints can be made in the following way.

- Forms available in the entrance to the Children's Home
- By email to emma.mcvinnie@discoverhannahs.org
- By email to tanya.king@discoverhannahs.org (If the complaint is related to the Registered Manager).
- To the Registered Manager or any member of staff by email, letter, telephone, or verbally (formally or informally).
- By letter, telephone or in person to a senior manager, Directors or to Trustees, or the Chief Executive
- Via a registering authority or funding body.

What is a complaint?

Complaints are individual and unique to the complainant. What one person may complain or grumble about such as an action, behaviour or a response to a situation, may be deemed acceptable by others. (See below to possible complaints)

- An unwelcome or disputed decision.
- Concern about the quality or appropriateness of a service provided.
- Delay in decision making or provision of services.
- Delivery or non-delivery of services including complaints procedures.
- Lack of services and required short breaks
- Missing personal belongings
- Inconsistencies in service
- Communication.
- Attitude or behaviour of staff.

Who can complain?

- Any child or young person who is accessing the Children's Home (Hannah Avenue) or DHRC
- The child or young person's parent, including natural parents, adoptive parents and guardians or a person whom holds parental responsibility (PR)
- A foster carer in their own right and/or on behalf of a child
- Stakeholders and professional contacts to the children home
- A member of public or neighbour

Complaints made on behalf of a child or young person

Where a complaint is received from a representative acting on behalf of a child or young person, the local authority should normally confirm where possible, that the child or young person is happy for this to happen, and that the complaint submitted reflects his/her views.

Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints will always be recorded and referred to the Registered Manager in the same way as other complaints.

The fact that the complaint is from an anonymous source should not in itself justify a decision not to pursue the matter. Nor should it rule out referral to other procedures as relevant

Forms of complaints

Individual grumbles

The Children's Home (Hannah Avenue) and DHRC recognises that complaints are often difficult to make, and that "bureaucratic" processes are unlikely to be welcomed by children and young people however good their purpose.

The Children's Home (Hannah Avenue) and DHRC therefore encourages suggestions on any matter connected with an individual's care and placement plan, treatment within the home, the operation of the Children's Home, meal arrangements etc. as a means of dealing with any dissatisfaction or grumbles before they reach the complaints stage.

Verbal Complaints

A verbal complaint will be dealt with as quickly, efficiently and as sympathetically as possible. Verbal complaints can often stem from a misunderstanding and can normally be resolved swiftly, but we understand that this is not always the case

All employees of the Children's Home (Hannah Avenue) and DHRC are, potentially, recipients of verbal complaints, and upon receipt, an employee will:

- Listen to the complaint and always apologise accordingly
- Attempt to deal with the matter, informally to the overall satisfaction of the complainant.
- Prepare a comprehensive written documentation of the complaint to ensure all information is captured
- Feedback to the line manager in the allocated time scale set, who will then document appropriately the verbal complaint received, and where needed, seek assurance from the

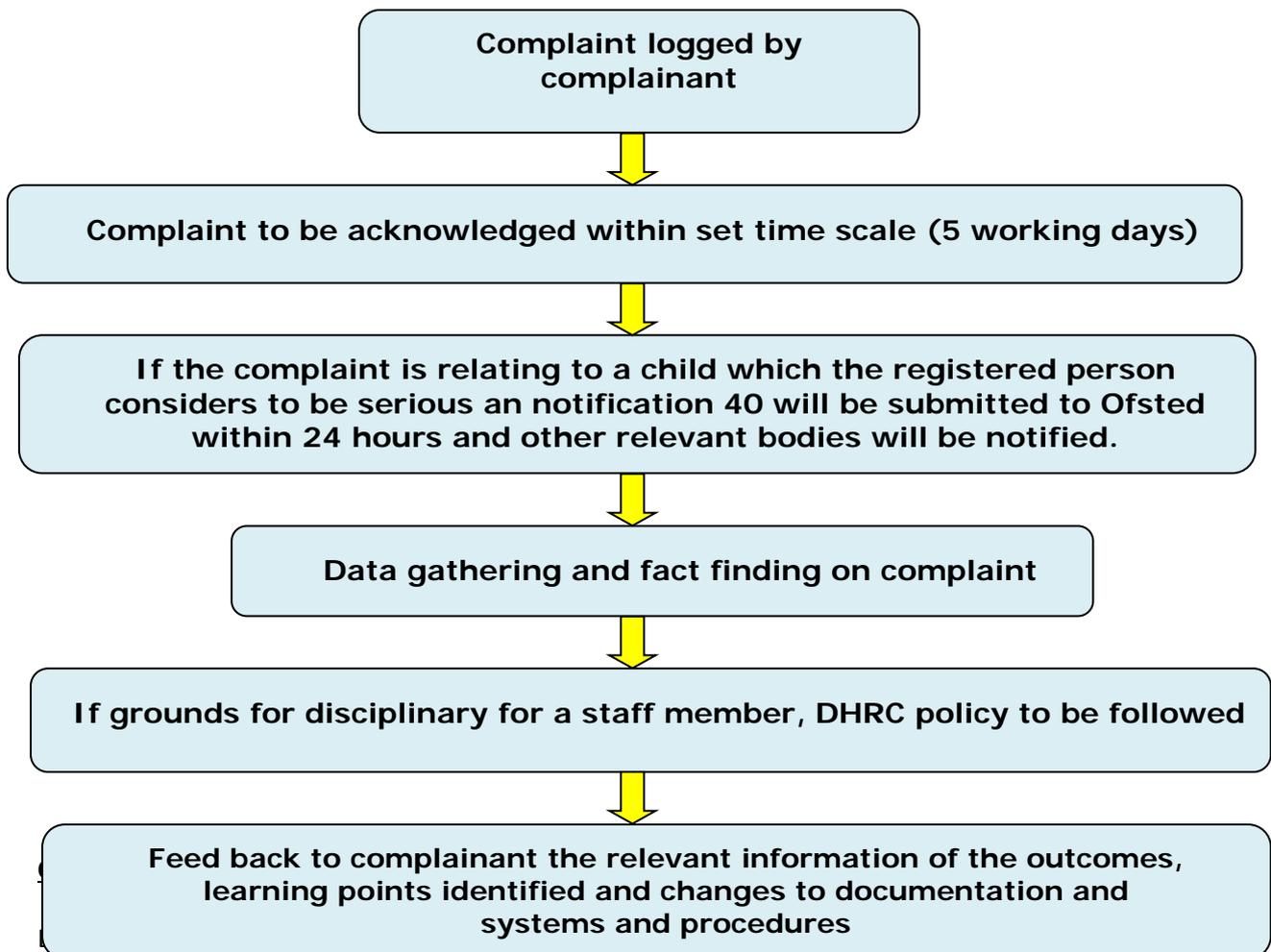
complainant that the matter has been dealt with satisfactorily. If the complainant is not satisfied at this point, then the matter will be dealt with as if it was a written complaint.

- If a member of staff feels unable to deal satisfactorily with someone's worries, concerns or complaint, this will be passed on to a senior member of staff such as the Registered Manager Responsible Individual, or Director of Services. Equally a complainant, who is worried and feels that his or her concern is not being satisfactorily handled, can then discuss this with the appropriate senior member of staff.

Written Complaints

- All written complaints (together with unresolved verbal complaints) should be addressed by the Registered Manager or relevant professional.
- Any written complaint addressed to someone else within the Children's Home should be referred to the Registered Manager for action and resolution.
- Any complaint about the Registered Manager should be addressed to the Responsible Individual, Directors or Trustees.

Process of a written complaint



- Communication
- Clarifying that the child understands the complaints policy and procedures
- Ensuring they know how to make a complaint

In some situations, the child’s parent or legal guardian may complain on behalf of the child. However, we have a legal duty to ensure that all children and young people who are ‘looked after’ by a local authority have access to complaints.

An ‘Easy read’ version of the complaints policy can be requested, which can be used by the children and young people to help make a complaint.

Children and young people with profound communication needs - Pre verbal communication

Children and young people express likes, dislikes choices and opinions in a variety of different ways:

- Facial expressions
- Body language
- Tone of body
- Pre verbal sounds

To help facilitate this, staff receive a high level of training, to help support individuals complex communication needs, and understand the importance of being aware, and able to identify subtle changes to allow the opportunity for individuals to communicate preferences in their chosen form. This helps form independent voice for the children and young people.

How children and young people complain

Form of complaint	Process to follow
Individual grumbles	<p>All children and young people have access to the senior team and management on a regular basic to highlight any low level grumbles This is in the form of the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned key worker/core team who the young people can communicate any concerns, grumbles • open door policy of management • monthly house meetings • 2 weekly informal evening spent with the manager or senior team to address any low level grumbles
Verbal complaints	<p>All children and young people have an assigned key worker/core team who will work closely with an individual to build bonds and trust, which allows them to support the young people to voice a complaint or communicate this on their behalf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will then be documented and addressed accordingly • The hope is that it can be resolved informally and quickly, to reduce the impact or stress/anxiety for all parties involved • The children and young person involved will be informed of the changes made in response to the issues highlighted • If the result doesn’t meet the expectation of individual involved this can then be escalated to a formal complaint

Written complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All written complaints received from any child, young person or on behalf of a young person (together with unresolved verbal complaints) should be addressed by the Registered Manager or relevant professional• We will write to you within 5 working day• If the Registered Manager thinks the complaint is considered to be serious, and meets a list of criteria set by Ofsted, they may have to let other professionals know such as Ofsted/social workers within 24 hours, but we will keep you informed• The Registered Manager will then collect information• The Registered Manager will feedback to the individual who complained, or who complained on their behalf, any relevant information of the outcomes, learning points identified and changes to documentation and systems and procedures.
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When unhappy with the outcome

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the investigation of the complaint, the complainant will log in writing within 10 days to the RM/RI/HR their non-satisfaction, and escalate this to an appeal to challenge the outcome.

This will then be passed to the Board of Directors to lead and set time scales appropriate according to the complex nature of the complaint.

Further to this other external professionals can also be involved this could include:-

- Ofsted
- IRO
- The Commissioners in their Local Authority
- Citizens Advice Bureau

What happens if a complaint is withdrawn?

People can change their minds all the time – we all do it!

Complaints can be withdrawn at any stage. If this happens, the Registered Manager needs to complete the following actions:

- Request that the person who made the complaint sends them a letter, email or uses other appropriate means of communication to confirm that they wish to withdraw their complaint.
- Write or email the person who made the complaint to confirm that they have withdrawn their complaint.

Please note that if the initial complaint has highlighted an issue that the DHRC believes it can learn from, or which indicates it may be able to do something differently, (to the benefit of the children and young people we support or DHRC), the internal investigation may continue even if the complaint has been withdrawn. In this situation, we should then offer the complaint informal feedback on the outcomes of the investigation.

What to do with frequent, multiple, repetitive or intrusive complaints

We understand that sometimes, people who use our Children's Home (Hannah Avenue) and DHRC may feel so strongly about the issue that they have raised as a complaint, or can become frustrated, and this can impact on relationships and communication established

Sometimes this can result in people making frequent complaints on the same issues, or lots of complaints at the same time. If they are unhappy with the outcome of a previous complaint, they sometimes make another complaint which is almost the same as that previous complaint.

We are totally committed to treating everybody that we engage with fairly, equally and with respect. We are also fully committed to learning from our mistakes, and changing the way we act so that we can support people and run the Children's Home (Hannah Avenue) and DHRC more effectively.

We will not let the impact on the relationship and communication with the children and young person and, we will endeavour to uphold the quality of service provided whilst addressing the issues highlighted.

We hope through open transparent communication, to reduce the likelihood of complaints developing from low level grumbles to formal written complaints.

What happens if a staff member is the subject of a complaint

Staff support while a complaint is being investigated

If a staff member is the subject of a complaint, the Registered Manager will liaise with the HR team, to agree what the best course of action is regarding that staff member while the complaint is being investigated.

It may be necessary to suspend the staff member without prejudice while the investigation is taking place. It is recognised that this is distressing for those under investigation, and for the member of teams.

The Children's Home (Hannah Avenue) and DHRC will make every effort to resolve complaints as soon as possible. Staff will also be offered support through HR team and Employee Assistance Programme

The RM or HR role in providing progress updates to staff who are subject of a complaint

If a staff member is the subject of a complaint, Registered Manager or HR must make sure that staff member(s) are considered throughout the complaint process.

The Registered Manager or HR must ensure that the staff member(s) are kept fully informed of the complaints progress at all stages:

- Making sure that staff members are made aware that they are the subject matter of a complaint
- Providing details of the complaint timings
- Providing updates of the complaint progress and any revised timing
- Making sure that the outcome of the complaint is made known to the staff member

The Registered Manager should work with the HR team throughout the complaint process to make sure that the staff member(s), who is the subject of a complaint, is kept up-to-date and informed appropriately throughout the complaint process.

Staff member disciplinary actions resulting from a complaint

We are committed to learning from the mistakes made. This may mean that we need to change the way we work, or the processes that we have in place. The outcomes of complaints will make clear what we can change to improve, and how we support children and young people, staff and families.

Sometimes, the outcomes of complaints will result in us having to take disciplinary action against the staff member(s) who is the subject of complaint. Where staff have behaved in a way which requires disciplinary action, we will manage this situation through the 'disciplinary policy and procedures'.

We recognise that this is upsetting for both the staff member involved in the complaint and their colleagues. We will always offer support to people involved through the EAP and the HR team

Complaint Investigation

Guide for complaints; how complaints are conducted; a complaint investigation and record findings and outcome.

