

HARMONY HOUSE

COMPLAINTS POLICY

QUALITY STANDARDS

Legislation	Details
Regulation 5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met	The home will play a part in promoting the best interests of the child, proactively advocating for the child to ensure that other play their role to deliver the high quality of support that is needed.
Regulation: The Children's Views Wishes and Feelings	Staff should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they rise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without any fear that this will result in any adverse consequences.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

- Allegations against staff policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Complaints Form
- Compliments Form
- Notification of Serious Events Policy
- Referring Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Children Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Who Can Complain

Complaints can be made by various individuals:

- Children.
- Parents and carers.
- Social workers.
- Placing authority.
- Employees of the home.
- Members of the public.

This policy will be provided on request to professionals, relatives, and friends, who wish to make a complaint on behalf of a child.

We welcome complaints, we learn from them and use them to improve the service. We are always willing to listen and will do our utmost to resolve any concerns about the home or staff, if we are unable to resolve the complaint, we will explain how to take the complaint further.

We will not discriminate or treat anyone any differently because they wish to complain.

Registered Manager – Elizabeth Ndegwa

Contact Details: 01753537797

Responsibility of the Registered Manager

- 1 We will ensure that children, and where appropriate their families, significant others, and Independent Visitors, are provided with information on how to complain, including how they can secure access to an Advocate. This information will be written and will refer to the rights of children and young people to make complaints to a variety of sources including Ofsted, the Children's Commissioner for England and other organisations offering this support to children and young people.
- 2 We will ensure that Advocates provided are suitably skilled, for example in working with children who have a disability or communication difficulty.
- 3 We will provide the home with a written policy and procedural guidelines on considering and responding to representations and complaints in accordance with legal requirements and relevant government guidance.
- 4 We will make sure that all staff receive training in complaints procedures.
- 5 We will regularly review the records of complaints by children or concerning the welfare of children, to check the satisfactory operation of the complaints procedure and to identify patterns of complaint and action taken on individual complaints.
- 6 We will also, take any appropriate action from such a review in relation to the home's policies and practices, as well as taking any necessary further follow-up action in relation to individual cases.

Company name: Remedy support and recruitment group ltd Reviewed by: Elizabeth Ndegwa

Date :19/07/2024 Phone: 01753537797

Email: info@remedysupport.co.uk Website: www.remedysupport.co.uk

Complaint about the Registered Home Manager

If the complaint relates to the Home's Manager, the member of staff must contact either:

- The Responsible Individual /Complaints Manager.
- The Company Director.
- The out-of-hours duty manager.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- OFSTED

The responsible manager will follow the Stage 1 procedure.

The Complaints Manager: Govindarajen Patten

Contact Details: 01753537797

The Complaints Manager will:

- 1 Act in the best interests of the child.
- 2 On receiving a complaint, aim to see the affected child without delay or within 4 days of the complaint.
- 3 Notify and consult with appropriate Registered Managers about the further handling of the complaint including:
 - They will make necessary interim action in relation to the affected child, the complainant and the person who is the subject of the complaint, if appropriate.
 - They will consider any other established procedures to be implemented such as Child Protection / Safeguarding and Disciplinary Procedures and involvement of the Police and /or other agencies. Outcomes of such processes should be recorded on the complaint file. The child should be informed of the process being followed by the Complaints Manager or the Registered Manager.
 - They will be arranging for the appointment of an Advocate to negotiate directly on resolving the complaint or to support the child through the formal procedure.
 - They have the responsibility of keeping a complete record of all complaints received and how they are dealt with, including the outcome.
 - They will report to the Director on complaints received, how they have been dealt with and the results and identify any major issues affecting the children.

Informal Complaints Process

If a child (or their family) is unhappy with the service provided; with individual care provided or with the attitude or behaviours of staff; or for any other reason; the person receiving the information will take the following action:

(At every stage the person will be offered access to an advocate and interpreter if required).

- 1 Check with the person that they feel comfortable speaking to them; or would they prefer someone else? Provide information regarding the availability of someone else on site, or who is contactable off-site, at any time of day.
We will ensure that no person who is the subject of a complaint takes any part in its consideration other than, if the Registered Manager considers it appropriate, at the informal resolution stage only.
- 2 If the problem is brought up by an adult, record the information in the complaint logbook, record what the person wishes to say, and read it back to them to ensure they have accurately been written. Record the name and contact details.
- 3 The member of staff receiving the information should try to resolve the problem immediately, if possible, e.g. lost property, transport not arriving. The member of staff should ensure they record the action taken, and check and record that the person is satisfied with the outcome.
- 4 If the problem is brought up by the child staff must ensure that it is appropriately recorded, as well as any action is taken and the satisfaction of the child with the outcome.

If the problem cannot be resolved immediately (within 48 hours) or is a serious matter, then:

- Staff should explain what happens next. Staff should give the child a summary of the Complaints Procedure in a way that is suitable to their age and level of understanding and/or a complaints leaflet and go through it with them. And the children's guide which was given to the child before or upon admission to the home.
- If the complainant speaks another language staff should be aware of what language they speak and make every effort to get the interpreter.
- Children should be referred to the relevant manager and should also be directed to the Children's rights and advocacy service, independent of the home.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Informal/Problem solving

At this stage young people will most likely share their concerns with staff. They are often discussed with staff without any intentions of reporting their concern as complaint. The staff (shift leader) will be resolving this issue and share the concern with managers and staff team informally. If the concern is about the shift, the staff will forward the young person's concern to a manager to respond.

A response is given within 24 hours. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, the person making the complaint can request for it to be escalated to the Responsible Individual, who will carry out an investigation on the concern, or appoint another senior manager to investigate the complaint. If a complaint is escalated, it becomes formal and is treated as stage one complaint.

The child will always be asked what they think might resolve the issue at the earliest stage, but if they are dissatisfied with the proposed informal resolution, which may include simply acknowledging that Harmony house could have handled the situation better, or the matter is deemed more serious they would be supported to make a formal complaint.

Stage One: Formal Process

The expectation is that most complaints are responded to and resolved at Stage One.

When the Responsible Individual or Complaints Manager receives a complaint directly, this will be considered under Stage One and the Complaints Manager will:

- 1 Acknowledge the complaint within 2 working days, notifying the complainant that they have received their complaint and explaining the timescales within which a response will be sent. The complaints manager should establish whether the complainant has, or requires, an Advocate.
- 2 Notify the appropriate manager.
- 3 Request that the manager attempt to resolve the complaint within **10 working days** and send a copy of the response to the Complaints Manager, together with a summary of any points not covered in the letter.

If it is not possible to respond within the above timescale - e.g. where files or records need to be checked or a key member of staff is not available – the appropriate manager (in b) above) must inform the Complaints Manager who will send a holding letter to advise the complainant of the delay. However, the maximum period for a complaint to remain at **Stage One is 20** working days, unless the complainant has agreed to an extension of time.

Complaints made by children should be recorded as follows:

- When a complaint is made about a child's placement, the fact that the complaint was made and resolved should be noted in the complaint log and a summary of the complaint and how it was resolved should be recorded in the complaints log and where appropriate the child/young person's logbook.
- Where the complaint involves sensitive personal information, such as details should not be kept in a log that is accessible to public. Before countersigning the complaints log, the manager should consult with the complainant to ensure that the matter was handled appropriately.

Any formal complaint should be recorded, in writing or by other means, (children may ask for help with the writing of their complaint) and forwarded to the Manager. All formal complaints must be recorded in the complaints log.

The manager must keep a record of complaints dealt with at Stage One and their outcomes. This record should then be forwarded to the Complaints Manager.

If the matter cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction within 20 working days, they must be advised that they have a right to proceed to Stage Two and given assistance to do so as necessary. The complainant may, however, agree to extend the deadline for the Stage One process.

The complainant, if not satisfied, can progress the complaint to Stage 2 of the Complaints procedure.

Stage 2

- The complaint will be investigated by a manager/ director not previously involved in the complaint or by an independent person employed by the organisation. They will respond in writing within 28 days, outlining their findings and recommendation to the Registered manager and Responsible Individual.
- Where it is not possible to complete the investigation within 28 working days, Stage 2 may be extended to a maximum of 65 working days. All extensions should be agreed upon by the Complaints Manager. The complainant should be informed of the reasons for the delay and a date for completion in writing.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, the Complaints Manager will inform them of their right to take to Stage 3.

Stage 3

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response of Harmony house and contacts the complaints manager within 20 working days of being notified of the outcome of the stage 2 investigation, stating their reasons for this request, the complaints manager will make arrangements for the panel to be convened within 30 days of the request.

The Panel will consist of three independent persons who are appointed by the organisation.

The complainant has the right to attend the meeting of the Panel and may be accompanied by a support person or advocate, who can be nominated to speak on their behalf.

Within 5 working days of the conclusion of the review, the members of the Panel must decide upon their recommendations to the Director, who will send a written response to the complainant within 15 working days of receiving the Panel's report.

The response should advise the complainant that they may refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman should they remain dissatisfied.

Contact of the Local Government Ombudsman at:

P.O Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
Tel: 0300 061 0614

Complaints can also be made Ofsted at:

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Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231

Complaints from neighbours / local community

Neighbours of Harmony house who wish to make a complaint about the children living in the home are not able to access the Children and Families Complaints Procedure as they are not making a complaint on behalf of children or delivery of a service. However, they can make a written complaint to the home.

Attempts should always be made by the Registered manager to resolve the complaint as quickly and early as possible. Staff should always inform the complaints manager of any complaints made by neighbours.

Any complaint received regarding the home must be responded to as quickly as possible.

- Staff must always remain professional and polite.
- Staff must listen to the complaint and try to resolve it immediately.
- Staff must apologise for any disturbance or damage if any caused.
- Staff must record the date, nature of the complaint and any action taken.
- The Registered Manager has the responsibility of being kept informed of all complaints punctually.

Regulation 44 Visitor

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 states Regulation 44 visits states that:

'The registered Person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement.'

Ofsted reviews the content of Regulation 44 reports to inform the next inspection and uses the information to decide if we need to take any other action.

To comply with the statutory regulations the Visiting Officer must:

- Provide an opportunity for any child, parent or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish) to do so. (This links in with Standard 2 of the Quality Standards whereby the Visitor is ensuring that Children's wishes and feelings are heard).
- Check on the physical condition of the home.

- Form an opinion on the standard of care provided.
- Check the following records: Daily log, Complaints record, Sanctions record and Restraint record.

Recourse to Other Procedures

If during a complaint being made, it becomes apparent that the issue being complained about potentially falls into Child Protection / Safeguarding or disciplinary action then the complaints procedure will be suspended, and appropriate procedures invoked by the responsible manager. Outcomes of Child Protection or Disciplinary Procedures should be notified to the Children's Complaints Manager to record on file and for inclusion in reporting on outcomes.

Children need to be kept informed by the Registered Manager of the progress and outcomes of any matters dealt with by these procedures.

Safeguarding Children

If any member of staff receives a complaint that relates to the safety or safeguarding of a child, they should refer immediately to the local safeguarding partnership.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH)

- Main Telephone: 01296 383962
- Out of hours: 0800 999 7677

Training

All staff are trained, as part of the induction process, in:

- What constitutes a complaint.
- What the procedure is for dealing with an informal complaint in the home and how it should be recorded.
- To whom a complaint is made outside the home.
- The procedure to be followed should a complaint not be resolved promptly by informal means, including who should be notified and the keeping of records.
- How a child can be assisted in making a complaint, including situations where a child has a communication impairment, and how to access an advocate, interpreter, or signer.

The induction training will be followed up with a specific session on complaints.

The Manager attends further training in dealing with and responding to complaints.