



SENDIASS Staffordshire Family Partnership

Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure to be followed when SENDIASS Staffordshire Family Partnership (SFPS) receives a complaint, comment or compliment from parents, carers, volunteers or other users.

SFPS is committed to continually improve the support it provides and any feedback received will be an opportunity to:

- Listen, review, respond and take action/implement changes if necessary
- Help shape future practice
- Share best practice and celebrate achievements

2. Complaints

2.1 What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet from someone about the SENDIASS Staffordshire Family Partnership Service, which requires a response. It may include:

- Feeling disgruntled, disappointed or unhappy;
- Feeling you were not treated with respect or courtesy; or an action, or lack of action by a member of SFPS that has led to you feeling anxious, worried or concerned.

Complaints should relate to events which occurred within the last 12 months.

All complaints will be investigated in line with this procedure. The complainant will always be informed of the outcome of the complaint. Outcomes may include: an explanation, an apology, practical action, implementation of change specific to the particular complaint, review of practice.

2.2 What is a comment or compliment?

These include:

- Thanking us for something that has particularly pleased you.
- Suggestions for improving the service
- Feeling that someone has gone over and above your expectations

- Feedback on the service we have provided or the work we have done?
- Comments or suggestions received will be passed onto the SENDIASS Staffordshire Family Partnership Manager for discussion and appropriate action
- Compliments received will also be passed onto the relevant person and the Manager for their information and records

3. Who can make a complaint?

Those eligible are:

- Staff, Volunteers and Professionals
- Parents, carers, children and young people
- Any service user who access the SENDIASS Staffordshire Family Partnership
- Anyone working in partnership with SFPS

Please note, this procedure is solely for complaints, comments and compliments about the service received from SENDIASS Staffordshire Family Partnership Service.

It does not apply to the actions or decisions of an individual or organisation outside of the service.

Exemptions from the procedure may occur in exceptional circumstances. Instances of cases when an exemption may occur are:

- Other procedures or appeals procedures are in place for dealing with the issues raised. This would include Court proceedings, Criminal procedures, Safeguarding procedures, etc.;
- Complaints occurring more than 12 months ago;
- The same complaint has already been investigated

How do I make a complaint, comment or compliment?

If a verbal complaint, comment or compliment is received, it will be requested that this be put in writing, either by e-mail or letter.

4. Is there an alternative to making a formal complaint?

Yes. Misunderstandings can often be sorted out on an informal basis. In the first instance, you may like to contact the SFPS Manager who may be able to resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved, the formal complaints procedure can be started.

5. Formal Complaints Procedure

Complaints may be received through Staffordshire County Council's complaints procedure or directly through the service. The complaints process consists of three stages:

- Stage 1 – SENDIASS Staffordshire Family Partnership Manager to provide a response following receipt of the complaint
- Stage 2 – Review by SENDIASS Staffordshire Service Commissioner

5.1 Stage 1 –SENDIASS Staffordshire Family Partnership Manager to provide a response

The complaint will be forwarded upon receipt to the SFPS Manager. An acknowledgement letter will be sent, within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint. If the complaint is about the SFPS Manager, the procedure will start at Stage 2.

A full investigation into the circumstances surrounding the complaint will be carried out by the Manager. This may involve talking to people concerned

.The complainant will receive a written response letter including how the complaint investigation has been conducted, confirmation of outcomes and any actions to be taken. The complainant will be informed that they may request a Stage 2 complaint should they remain dissatisfied. A complaint will be responded to within 20 working days. In exceptional circumstances where a complaint will take longer than 20 days to investigate the complainant will be informed of this and the date by which they will receive a reason.

6.2 Stage 2 SENDIASS Commissioner of Service to investigate/review

- All requests for Stage 2 investigation must be in writing to the SENDIASS Commissioner of Service. This must be within 20 working days of the Stage 2 response letter and specify why the complainant remains dissatisfied and what outcomes are being sought. An acknowledgement letter will be sent within 5 working days of receipt to the complainant.

The SENDIASS Commissioner of Service will review the complaint, making sure all relevant information has been taken into account.

- A Stage 2 complaint may take the form of an investigation or mediation.

Mediation

Mediation may be offered to help resolve the complaint. This will involve all the relevant parties meeting to discuss the complaint and agreeing a way forward to help resolve the complaint.

Investigation

An investigation will involve the SENDIASS Commissioner of Service reviewing the investigation of the complaint to provide an independent and objective view. This will involve contacting the complainant to clarify the complaints and desired outcomes. If during this meeting the outcomes sought cannot be achieved through the complaints procedure this will be explained and where possible an alternative route provided.

A full response will be provided to the complainant within 20 working days, though if the issue is complicated the complainant will be written to, to inform them of when

they will hear the outcome of the investigation. The response will include how the complaint has been investigated their findings, outcomes and recommendations/actions to be taken.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the conclusion of the Stage 2 they may request their complaint be considered under Stage 3 of the procedure.

The SENDIASS Commissioner of Service decision will be final. A record of discussions and decisions will be kept.

Recording and Monitoring of Complaints, Comments and Compliments

All complaints, comments and compliments will be recorded and kept on a confidential database. All complaints will be treated confidentiality according to the confidentiality policy and will be reported and discussed at the SFPS Advisory Group meetings.

Date of review: July 2018

Date of next review: July 2019