

COMPLAINTS POLICY



Mission Statement

"A safe home and a fresh start. Delivering high quality accommodation and support services for young people aged 16-25 who are leaving care or at risk of homelessness. We engage our young people actively; supporting and developing their capacity for independent living in the community, social mobility and inclusion, increasing their positive life chances."

Introduction

At Moving On we have a vested interest and are committed to ensuring that young people are well supported and able to voice their concerns. We recognise the importance of listening to young people's experiences and views about their home particularly if they are unhappy.

Complaints will be dealt with in a way that is most suitable to the issues and not just according to a set of procedures although recognising the importance that a clear policy and procedures play in the process.

This means when addressing the complaint, we will consider:

- The complainant's views
- The nature of the complaint
- The potential implication for the complainant
- The potential implications for Moving On

Our primary aim is making sure that everyone, young people, parents, and others, have and feel confident in the complaint process and that we take their complaint/concerns seriously.

Definition of Complaint

A complaint is a statement in which a young person or others interested in the support of a young person and other stakeholders can express their dissatisfaction. This may include dissatisfaction about, but not limited to:

- The standards and quality of service delivered
- The actions or inactions of any member of Moving On staff
- The actions of another young person accommodated in the provision
- The standard of the property
- A lack of response to concerns raised.

Moving On policy also allows for staff, family members and others involved with young persons of the home outside the home, to make both minor and major complaints.

The complaints policy may also be accessed by those external to Moving On and with no direct interest in the young people's lives, i.e., local shopkeepers, neighbours, the police, etc.

At Moving On we aim to meet our statutory obligations when responding to complaints. We intend to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest stage. However, we recognise that our young people, may not wish for their complaints or concerns to be dealt with formally and may want their, complains/concerns addressed quickly. It is essential and important, to listen to what young people want.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial.
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an appropriate manager. Where and when necessary, we may commission an independent person to investigate a complaint.
- Address all the points identified within the complaint and provide an effective and prompt response.
- Any complaint raised by a young person irrespective of the subject matter and/or whether staff consider the concerns to be serious or otherwise, must be acknowledged using the appropriate documentation. In such circumstances it must be made clear to the young person the action to be taken to resolve their concern and the timescale for this to be done.
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality, although if the complaint relates to safeguarding matters, the complainant will be informed of our duty to safeguard children and young people and therefore the information will need to be shared with the relevant agencies in line with our Safeguarding Policy, Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy, where the complainant is a young person it is important that we take account of their age, understanding and ability.
- Ensure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair, and proportionate, and meet the commitment to safeguard and promote young people's welfare in line with the regulatory requirements.
- Keep complainants informed at all stages of the complaints process including any delays.
- We will use the learning and outcomes from complaints to assist us to develop and improve our practice.

Our aim is to resolve all concerns and complaints in a timely manner and through informal process wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

How to complain

On admission, young people, their families, where appropriate, and stakeholders should be familiarised with the complaint procedure and provided with copies.

The manager should ensure that the complaints procedure is revisited with the young person in line with their understanding. Young people should be encouraged to raise their issues and concerns at the earliest opportunity and wherever possible to resolve these. They may not wish for their complaint or concerns to be dealt with formally and may wish their complaint/concerns to be addressed quickly. Wherever possible, it is important to listen to what they have to say and what they want. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when they would like to raise their concern/complaint formally.

Complaints may be made anonymously or in person, verbally or in writing.

Roles and responsibilities

The individual appointed to investigate the complaint/concerns will:

- Try to clarify, what has happened, who was involved, what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report to the manager. The report would address the issues investigated and include any learning and or recommendation for improvement as well as

where the standard have been breached. It is important to note that where the child or young person complains directly to the manager it may be that the manager will deal with the complaint. In any case they will inform the child or young person

The investigating officer will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and manager, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence before complaints meetings if considered relevant.
- Arrange the complaint hearing.
- Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of any hearing.

Time scales

It is important that any complaint is raised without delay and within a reasonable timeframe.

Where a complaint is from a young person this will be addressed within 10 working days of the complaint being received. They will be told if there are any delays. It is important that managers ensure that they and their staff act promptly to whatever concern a young person raise and that they are taken seriously irrespective of who or what the complaint is in regard.

Under no circumstances must staff make decisions on what they consider to be or otherwise a concern/complaint from a young person. This must be the decision of the manager in consultation with the young person, senior home staff and social worker.

Complaint from other sources will be addressed within 10 working days. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents this may require a longer time to investigate. In the event of any such delays the complainant are kept informed and up to date of the progress of the investigation into their complaint.

The Investigation Process

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the HR manager will investigate the complaint by liaising with the relevant department manager.

The manager will:

- Log the complaint.
- Acknowledge the complaint in writing

The Investigating Officer/Manager will:

- Hold an initial fact-finding meeting with the complainant and record this.
- Most complaints can be resolved at this informal stage. If the complaint is resolved, the complainant will be asked to sign a record of the meeting as an indication of their agreement with the outcome. They will be given a copy of the signed minutes, and the home will retain the original. The complaints log will then be completed with the outcomes.
- If the complaint is not resolved at this stage, the investigating officer/manager will carry out any subsequent checks speak to any other staff or young people as required and then agree an outcome. An outcome letter will be sent to the complainant with a comments page to be returned to the home. If the complainant is not happy with the outcome, the outcome letter will set out what will happen next (see below), and in the case of the complainant being a child or young person it will explain what they should do next, including telling their social worker.

Where the complainant is not happy with the outcome, the manager will liaise with the Responsible Individual, who may:

- Nominate investigating officer external of the home will look at the complaint.
- Or, further investigations may take place, with all previous paperwork re-inspected thoroughly.
- Following this, a further outcome letter will be sent to the complainant with a comments page to be returned to the home.
- If the complainant is still not happy with the outcome, there will be a further stage of complaint they can pursue (see below).

At the final stage of the complaint process, the complainant will be advised of their right to go to an independent body such as the Placing Authority, Ofsted, Advocate/Children's Rights to investigate the complaint, and the complainant will be supported through the process. Additionally, any complaint at this stage of the process will be considered by the most senior personnel of the company.

Final notes

Complaint outcomes can be of 3 categories:

- **Upheld** - There is evidence to support the complaint.
- **Partly upheld**- There is evidence to support aspects of the complaint.
- **Not upheld** - There is no evidence to support the complaint.

Throughout the stages, all investigations carried out will be documented and recorded on ClearCare against the young person or home profile, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Any meetings/ discussions held must be signed and dated by all parties involved.

At any time during the complaint investigation complainants have the right to:

- Withdraw the complaint at any stage.
- Refer the complaint to the placing authority.
- Refer the complaint to the police.
- Refer the complaint to an independent body such as Ofsted.

If the complaint raises any safeguarding concern, then this should be managed via the company Safeguarding Policy/Procedure.

Complaints against the Registered Manager will be referred directly to the Responsible Individual who will make the necessary arrangements to ensure an appropriate, open, and transparent investigation.

