

Complaints, concerns and compliments

1. Purpose:

1.1. The purpose of the complaints, concerns and compliments policy and procedure is to offer an open, honest and fair process by which service users and partner organisations who are dissatisfied with the service they have received from Ormiston Families can express their appreciation, concerns or complaints and to receive a response.

1.1.1. If the complaint suggests that an employee or volunteer has acted in a way which may have harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult the *Management of Allegations* procedures must be followed.

2. Persons affected:

2.1. All staff and volunteers have a role to play in reducing the number of complaints, dealing with concerns courteously and efficiently, and responding to compliments appropriately.

3. Policy:

3.1. Ormiston Families believes that service users and partner organisations are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their individual needs and wishes.

3.2. Ormiston Families hopes that service users and partner organisations will be happy with the service provided and that they might like to voice their appreciation to the staff concerned.

3.3. All complaints will be treated confidentially. They will only be shared with other agencies if we are concerned that there is a potential risk of harm to others.

3.4. Ormiston Families welcomes any suggestions from service users and partner organisations on how Ormiston can improve our services and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns that they may have.

3.5. Any concerns will be dealt with professionally and promptly to ensure that any issues arising from them are handled appropriately and measurably improve the quality of Ormiston's services.

3.6. All compliments will be recorded and shared with staff in a feedback log-book or equivalent.

4. Responsibilities:

4.1. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to adhere to the requirements of the complaints, concerns and compliments policy and procedure.

4.2. Service and/or Operations Managers will ensure that service users are provided with appropriate information on how to make a complaint, concern or compliment.

4.3. Where Ormiston delivers services in partnership with other organisations, staff will also provide details of the other organisation's complaints procedure.

4.4. When a complaint is made there are 4 Stages in the process of dealing with it.

- 4.4.1. Normally, there would be an expectation for attempts to be made to resolve the complaint at Stages 1 or 2 where the service is delivered.
- 4.4.2. A complaint which goes straight to the Chief Executive will normally be referred to the appropriate stage for investigation and resolution.
- 4.5. The 4 Stages are as follows, although the complainant has the right to activate the next stage if dissatisfied with the outcome of the preceding stage:
 - 4.5.1. Stage 1: an informal resolution between the complainant and an appropriate staff member;
 - 4.5.2. Stage 2: a formal investigation by an appropriate manager at service delivery level;
 - 4.5.3. Stage 3: a formal review and adjudication by a senior manager and a member of the Senior Leadership Team;
 - 4.5.4. Stage 4: a formal appeal by the complainant to the Chief Executive.
- 4.6. When a formal complaint is received at Stage 2, the Service and/or Operations Manager will notify the Head of Quality and Governance.
 - 4.6.1. The Head of Quality and Governance will maintain a central record of formal complaints received and monitor their timely resolution in accordance with the turnaround times identified below (cf. s.5.2).
- 4.7. If a complaint is considered a 'serious incident', staff will consult and follow Section 5 of the Serious Incident policy in addition to the procedural requirements of this policy.
- 4.8. A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:
 - 4.8.1. harm to Ormiston Families' beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or any others who come into contact with our organisation through its work,
 - 4.8.2. loss of Ormiston Families' money or assets,
 - 4.8.3. damage to Ormiston Families' property, and/or
 - 4.8.4. harm to Ormiston Families' work or reputation.

5. Procedure for complaints made by service users:

- 5.1. **Stage 1:** If any service user should have cause for concern or any queries regarding the service provided, they should in the first instance take it up with the appropriate member of staff.
- 5.2. **Stage 2:** If the issue remains unresolved or the service user feels they have received an unsatisfactory outcome, then these concerns must be presented in writing as a formal complaint to Service or Operations Manager, as appropriate.
 - 5.2.1. The appropriate manager will investigate the complaint and respond to the service user in writing within 5 working days.
 - 5.2.2. A copy of the response will also be sent to the Head of Quality and Governance for monitoring and evaluation.
- 5.3. Most complaints should usually be resolved informally at Stage 1 or 2. If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 2, the complaint progresses to Stage 3.

- 5.4. **Stage 3:** If the matter is still not resolved, a formal meeting will be held between the service user, the Service or Operations Manager and a member of the senior leadership team to ensure that it is dealt with comprehensively.
- 5.4.1. A record of the meeting will be made along with documented actions.
- 5.4.2. All parties present at the meeting will review the accuracy of the record, sign to agree and receive a copy which will signify the conclusion of the procedure.
- 5.4.3. A copy of the record will also be sent to the Head of Quality and Governance for monitoring and evaluation.
- 5.5. If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 3, the complaint progresses to Stage 4.
- 5.6. **Stage 4:** If the matter cannot be resolved to their satisfaction, then service users have the right to appeal to the Chief Executive.
- 5.6.1. Notification of an appeal will be immediately forwarded to the Chief Executive.
- 5.6.2. Appeals will be dealt with by the Chief Executive or by another member of the Senior Leadership on their behalf and who has not been engaged in the complaint at Stage 3.
- 5.6.3. The complainant will be informed by the Chief Executive that the appeal has been received and will be given details of the process to be undertaken.
- 5.6.4. All existing information will be reviewed, and the gathering of further information initiated as necessary.
- 5.6.5. All available information will be given thorough consideration.
- 5.7. If the service user is not satisfied with the decision made by the Chief Executive, they must be told how to complain to the trustees, or to another appropriate organisation.
- 5.8. Service users will be able to access their record if they wish to.
- 5.8.1. All personal details relating to any complaint will be stored confidentially and will be only accessible by the parties involved.
- 6. Procedure for complaints made by other individuals or organisations:**
- 6.1. Ormiston Families welcomes feedback about its services from other organisations.
- 6.2. **If a complaint is received from another organisation**, staff must establish if the complaint relates to a general service delivery concern or a particular service user or employee.
- 6.2.1. Complaints about the service in general must be dealt with at Stage 2.
- 6.2.2. The Service or Operations Manager should review the complaint and advise the Operations Director accordingly before responding to the complainant direct.
- 6.2.3. A copy of the response will also be sent to the Head of Quality and Governance for monitoring and evaluation.

- 6.3. If another organisation complains on behalf of a service user**, the complaint should be referred to the relevant Service and/or Operations Manager.
- 6.3.1. The relevant manager will explain Ormiston’s Complaints procedure and suggest that the service user makes a complaint to Ormiston directly.
- 6.3.2. Details of a service user’s involvement with Ormiston or the nature of their complaint must not be discussed with another agency without their consent.
- 6.3.3. If the service user does not pursue the complaint, the conversation must still be forwarded to and recorded by the Head of Quality and Governance.
- 6.4. Ormiston welcomes complaints from everyone and will work with professional advocates appointed by service users.
- 6.4.1. However, staff must ensure that they have the service user’s written consent before they share information with an advocate.
- 6.5. If a friend or family member asks to make a complaint on behalf of a service user**, the relevant manager should follow a similar procedure as outlined in point 6.3 above.
- 6.5.1. The relevant manager should try to encourage the service user to make the complaint themselves, emphasising that they can be accompanied by a friend or family member, or the service user may request that the friend or family member is appointed as an advocate.
- 6.5.2. If the service user does not pursue the complaint, the conversation must still be forwarded to and recorded by the Head of Quality and Governance.
- 7. Document Approval:** Head of Quality and Governance, October 2022.
- 8. Revision History:** December 2016 | September 2019 | October 2022 | August 2023 (clarity, job titles and serious incidents, s.4.7-8) | October 2025 (removed reference to complaint leaflet).
- 9. Date of Review:** October 2025.