

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

March 2021

### POLICY STATEMENT

Home-Start is committed to developing the quality of its services. The Complaints Procedure enables referrers, other stakeholders (e.g. volunteers) and families being supported by Home-Start to make complaints about the service and to have their complaints considered.

A complaint, in the context of the Procedure, means: *‘the expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided and the wish to have that dissatisfaction recorded and/or considered for improvement of the service and for the removal of dissatisfaction’.*

### PROCEDURE

#### Who this procedure does not relate to

- a) Employees of Home-Start: The Complaints Procedure is separate and distinct from the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures which enables employees to raise grievances in connection with their condition of employment and other employment-related matters.
- b) The Disciplinary Procedure: is used by the employer when an employee may be in breach of the terms of employment. However, an investigation of complaints may lead to disciplinary issues.

#### Responsibility of staff and volunteers

Home-Start staff and volunteers need to be sensitive and helpful to the complainant, and those acting on their behalf, who express a concern. This is part of Home-Start’s commitment to a high quality service. Staff should give information about the Complaints Procedure and help complainants to understand and use it.

Staff and volunteers must advise anyone who feels that they may have been subject to any discrimination that they also have the right to use the provisions of the [Equality Act 2010](#). **There should be no delay in giving this information since there is a three month time limit for making a submission for a claim under the Act.** However, it is up to the person concerned to decide whether to use that process and it is advisable for them to take specialist advice before proceeding.

The senior worker is responsible for ensuring the smooth working of the Complaints Procedure.

If a complaint is related to the Senior Manager, a designated trustee will be the main point of contact until after an investigation is complete.

**Time Frame and Recording Requirements**

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| <b>1</b> | Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be informed about this procedure and will be sent a complaint form (appendix 1).<br>If a letter of complaint has been received this will be attached to a complaint form  |
| <b>2</b> | All complaints received will be acknowledged <b>within 5 working days</b> and a copy sent to the chair of the trustee board.<br>All complaints will be recorded on the Complaints record form (Appendix 2) and retained.  |
| <b>3</b> | Chair of trustees will consider the complaint and respond to the complainant  |
| <b>4</b> | If the complainant is not satisfied with the response an investigation will take place, normally <b>within 15 working days</b> of complaint being acknowledged.<br>The timescale of resolving the complaint will be confirmed to the complainant. (Trustees should aim to provide a response <b>within 25 working days</b> ). |
| <b>5</b> | Result of investigation sent to complainant and recorded on Appendix 3.   |
| <b>6</b> | All complaints received should be reported to the full board of trustees.   |

**This policy adopted:** .....(date)

**Date policy to be reviewed:** ..... (date)

**Signed (Chair).....Name:.....(date)**

**Appendix 1**

**To be completed by the complainant** (or attached to complainants letter of complaint). Please note if the complainant is being assisted please confirm that you have their permission to make this complaint on their behalf. See below.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Home-Start Ashford & District   | Complaint No.:  |
| Name and Address of Complainant   | If acting on behalf of the complainant please give your name and address as well as that of the person you are assisting  |
| Name:   | Name:   |
| Address, including post code:   | Address, including post code:   |
| Telephone No:   | Telephone No:   |
| I give permission for ..... to make this complaint on my behalf:<br><br>Signed.....                               | I confirm I have permission to make this complaint on behalf of .....<br>Relationship to complainant:<br><br>Signed ..... |
| Details of complaint<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>(expand or continue on a separate sheet if necessary) |   |

## Appendix 2

To be completed by the relevant person in the local Home-Start (usually the Home-Start manager or senior organiser/co-ordinator).

|   |  |                  |
|---|--|------------------|
| Home-Start Ashford & District   |  | Complaint No.:   |
| Name and Address of Complainant   |  |                  |
| Content of Complaint<br>Brief summary of complaint – attach written correspondence if available |  |                  |
| <b>Stage One</b>  |  | Dates            |
| Complaint received  |  |                  |
| Complaint acknowledged  |  |                  |
| Complaint recorded  |  |                  |
| Copy to chairperson   |  |                  |
| Written response sent to Complainant  |  |                  |
| <b>Stage Two</b> (if applicable)  |  | Dates (*or name) |
| Reply by complainant to response received   |  |                  |
| Reply acknowledged  |  |                  |
| Reply recorded  |  |                  |
| Copy to chairperson   |  |                  |
| Investigation commenced   |  |                  |
| Name(s) of person(s) investigating complaint  |  | *                |
| Investigation completed, outcome recorded   |  |                  |
| Written response sent to Complainant  |  |                  |

### Appendix 3

To be completed if complainant still dissatisfied after outcome of investigation: Meeting of trustees - final response sent to complainant after meeting.

|                                      |                |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Home-Start Ashford & District        | Complaint No.: |
| Name and Address of Complainant      |                |
| Written dissatisfaction acknowledged |                |
| Written dissatisfaction recorded     |                |
| Copy to chairperson                  |                |
| Trustee meeting - notices sent       |                |
| Trustee meeting - date held          |                |
| Written response sent to Complainant |                |