

Policy on complaints against foster carers

Policy statement

Children's Services will ensure that children and young people, their parents, foster carers and other people involved are able to make effective representations, including complaints, about any aspect of the fostering service, whether it is provided directly by the Council or by a contracted Authority or Agency.

Policy status

The Children Act 1989

Representations Procedure (Children) Regulations 1991

National Foster Care Assoc. (NFCA) Code of Practice 1995

Key points

1. On first approval as a foster carer the carer(s) should be given a copy of the Foster Care Handbook and can request a copy of the Statement of Purpose from their allocated worker. This should be used by all foster carers and social workers throughout the process of any complaint.
2. A complaint about a foster carer may be about the way in which the foster carer has been providing care for a child, or that they have breached the foster carer written agreement. A complaint of this type can be made by the child, the child's social worker, fostering social worker, family member, other agencies or even anonymously.
3. Complaints can be made on a child's behalf but this must be done using the complaints procedure through the Customer Services Officer. Advocacy will be offered to help the child make this complaint.

Standards

1. The Foster Carer Complaints Procedure should be easily understood, speedy, and fair to all involved.
2. The process should ensure that the disruption to the child and foster family is minimised.
3. The investigation of any complaint should be confidential, impartial and objective.
4. Complaints should be dealt with in specified time scales. The outcome of any complaint will be notified to the carer in writing.
5. Fostering Team Managers will be responsible for monitoring complaints against foster carers.

Number	Task	Responsible officer	Record	Timescale
1	A concern or a complaint, which is not of a child protection nature, is made to social services employee. That person must inform the child's social worker. In the case of a child protection concern the All Wales child protection procedures must be followed.	Person receiving complaint	Corporate complaints system	Immediately
2	Social worker informs the carer's supervising social/support worker to inform them and to discuss the best way to proceed dependent upon the case.	Locality social worker	SWIFT Case record	Immediately to within 7 days depending upon the seriousness of the concern or complaint
3	Field social worker and/or supervising social/support worker must attempt to resolve the matter.	Locality social worker or fostering worker	SWIFT Case record	Immediately to within 14 days depending upon the seriousness of the concern or complaint
4	If the concern/complaint can still not be resolved and the complainant is unsatisfied the complainant needs to be made aware of the Social Services complaints procedure. Support should be offered to assist the complainant in making the complaint.	Locality social worker and/ or fostering worker	SWIFT Case record	Immediately to within 7 days depending upon the seriousness of the concern or complaint
5	The locality social worker and/or supervising social/support worker should inform their relevant line manager of the matter.	Locality social worker and/ or fostering worker	SWIFT Case record	Immediately to within 7 days depending upon the seriousness of the concern or complaint
6	Write to the complainant with the outcome of the complaint.	Relevant Fostering Team manager	Letter on carer's file	Within 28 days
7	If the concern/complaint can still not be resolved but	Field social	SWIFT	Immediately

	the complainant is not prepared to complain further and the field social worker and/or supervising social/support worker believe that the complaint is of a reasonable serious nature then one of them must inform the respective managers of the fieldwork team and family placements.	worker and/or fostering worker	Case record	
8	The filed social worker/supervising social support worker should consider a referral to the children's complaints officer.	Field social worker and/or fostering worker	SWIFT Case record	Within 7 days
10	Liaise to discuss the best way to proceed. This could include a meeting involve all parties.	Fostering Team manager/ Senior Social Worker and/or fostering worker	SWIFT Case record	Within 7 days
11	Details of the complaint including action taken and outcome must be recorded on the carer's file on the "complaints and allegations list" and this to be kept at the front of the carer's file. The complaint must also be recorded on the central register of complaints and allegations held by the fostering team manager.	Fostering worker and team manager	Complaints and allegations list on carer's file and central register of complaints and allegations	Immediately following the resolution of the complaint All documents relating to the complaint must be held on the carer's file.

