

# RAILWAY CHILDREN

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

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### ***Part 1: Policy Statement***

Railway Children aims to be a learning organisation. We welcome all comments and feedback about the way we work, whether positive or negative- so that we can do even better in the future. Railway Children is committed to excellent service. We regard complaints as an opportunity to turn a negative experience into a positive one, as well as an opportunity to learn and to improve. If you have a complaint about us or problem, we will aim to resolve it as quickly and efficiently as possible in a personal, fair and confidential way.

### ***Part 2: Complaints Procedure***

Scope of the procedure

This Complaints procedure applies to complaints about the organisation from its service users. It does not apply to complaints from the organisation's staff or volunteers, which are considered under the organisation's grievance and problem-solving procedures.

The purpose of our complaints handling procedures is to ensure that we:

- listen and are responsive to people who raise an issue with us
- respond swiftly and at a level close to the point of service delivery
- are fair and consistent
- offer solutions and/or explanations
- offer complainants recourse to someone more senior/more independent if they wish
- ensure that staff who are mentioned in complaints receive support
- respect confidentiality
- record complaints consistently, and monitor what we record
- use complaints positively as an opportunity for learning and improvement.

In making a complaint we believe most people want:

- to be listened to;
- to have the problem accepted as important;
- to be offered a solution or explanation;
- to have their distress acknowledged and
- to be assured the same thing will not happen again.

It is therefore essential that people raising a complaint are involved in discussing their concerns and in finding solutions.

## **The Complaints Procedure**

The procedure will have the following stages:

### **1<sup>st</sup> stage - Informal Discussion**

This will normally be between the complainant and a member of staff. It will attempt to establish that the complainant wants to make a complaint, what the complaint is and, if possible, to find a resolution to the complaint that all involved find acceptable. The first stage should take place as soon as possible and within no more than a week of the complainant raising the matter.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> stage - Formal Complaints**

If not satisfied, the complainant can register a formal complaint either verbally or in writing which will be reviewed by a senior manager. If the complaint is regarding a member of staff, it will be investigated using the disciplinary procedure.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Stage - Appeal**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of stage two, the complainant should be told in writing how to escalate their complaint to the next level within Railway Children.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Stage – Independent Review**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after Railway Children has investigated the complaint, they can ask for the complaint to be reviewed by a senior manager. They should also be advised of any external agencies they can complain to.

### **Recording Complaints**

All complaints will be recorded. The record will include the date of the complaint, the complainant's name and address unless they wish to remain anonymous, the form of it (i.e. in writing or verbal), who received it, what the details of the complaint were, and what action was taken, by whom and on what timetable.

### **Monitoring Complaints**

Senior managers and the CEO will report annually to the Board on complaints during the year and policies and procedures will be reviewed if appropriate.

### **Publicity**

The Procedure will be made available all service users.

## Appendix

### How to Complain

#### ***Step 1 – Tell Us***

If you are unhappy about any of our services we want to hear from you.

Please tell us about your complaint in any of the following ways:

- You can tell the service direct: ask to speak to the team leader or the manager, in person or by phone. They will be happy to arrange to meet you.
- If you would rather speak to someone not involved in running the service directly, please ask a staff member for the details of the next most senior manager.

#### ***Step 2 – We will respond to your complaint***

We will determine the best way to look into your complaint. This is usually done by the manager, or a senior member of staff, of the service concerned; but for serious complaints we may involve someone more senior straight away. We will usually need to discuss your complaint with you so we are clear about the outcome you want. We will aim to address your complaint within 10 working days; if this isn't possible, we will contact you to provide an explanation and indication of when a full response can be expected (within a further 10 working days). You will get a written response to your complaint.

#### ***Step 3 – If you're not happy with our response***

If you're still not happy, contact the Head of Programmes and let them know the reasons why you remain unhappy. The contact details for the Head of Programmes should be included in your written response. You should do this within 20 working days of receiving our written response.

#### ***Step 4 – If you remain dissatisfied***

If you remain dissatisfied after Railway Children has investigated your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be reviewed by a senior manager. The Safeguarding and Policy Director can advise you of any external agencies you may complain to.

#### ***Confidentiality***

We will only tell people involved in resolving your complaint about it. After it's resolved, we will keep a summary on record, using guidance from the Data Protection Act. If you use our services and have a file, the record will be placed on your file. We use anonymised information from complaints to make sure we learn and improve our services.