

## Complaints Policy

### QUALITY STANDARDS

Legislation	Details
Regulation 5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met	The home will play a part in promoting the best interests of the child, proactively advocating for the child to ensure that other play their role to deliver the high quality of support that is needed.
Regulation: The Children's Views Wishes and Feelings	Staff should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they rise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without any fear that this will result in any adverse consequences.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with our:**

- Allegations against staff policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Complaints Form
- Compliments Form
- Notification of Serious Events Policy
- Referring Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Children Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

### Policy Statement

#### Policy Aims

- It is the policy of NW Care Group Limited that children's wishes and feelings will be respected and taken into account in all aspects of their care.
- Children living in our homes must know how to complain and be able to do so if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the home or the service they are receiving. This Policy will be provided to all residents or their representatives.
- Children should know that complaints will be addressed seriously and without delay and fully responded to within a reasonable time. They will also be kept informed of the progress.
- Children should feel that complaints and suggestions are encouraged and welcomed as a way of NW Care Group Limited improving practice and providing them with the best they deserve.
- The staff must ensure that the children in their care understand their rights as looked-after children or children living in a children's home.
- Children will be informed of how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner for advice and assistance about their rights and entitlements.
- Staff should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise.
- Children must be able to raise issues or make complaints with support and without fear of adverse consequences.
- Complaints will be investigated in an even-handed and fair manner.
- The Registered Manager, Adam Fletcher, will oversee the response to the complaint.

- This Policy is written in accordance with Regulation 39, which sets out the requirements for NW Care Group Limited to have an established procedure for complaints made by or on behalf of the children.

## Who Can Complain

Complaints can be made by various individuals:

- Children
- Parents and carers
- Social workers
- Placing authority
- Members of staff
- Members of the public.

This policy will be provided on request to professionals, relatives, and friends who wish to file a complaint on behalf of a child.

We welcome complaints, we learn from them and use them to improve the service. We are always willing to listen and will do our utmost to resolve any concerns about NW Care Group Limited or staff; if we are unable to resolve the complaint, we will explain how to take the complaint further.

We will not discriminate or treat anyone any differently because they wish to complain.

To try to reduce complaints, there will be regular opportunities for children to express their wishes in formal and informal ways. This might be through the forum of a weekly children's meeting, regular key work sessions or simply through asking to speak to a member of staff about an issue that is causing concern. All children will be encouraged to express their views, even about minor issues, with the aim of resolving concerns before they give rise to a complaint.

Considering children's views when planning and undertaking their care is paramount. Children will be given the opportunity to participate in and shape the overall ethos, nature, and routine of the home they live in. The opinions and views of young people and their parents/carers, Social Workers, IRO, and any other significant professional will be sought and ascertained on a regular and frequent basis.

Upon admission, children are provided with information regarding how to complain and NW Care Group Limited's procedure for responding. They are also issued with information about various other organisations that they may wish to contact; these include the Children's Commissioner, ChildLine, and the NSPCC.

## Informal Complaints – 'Suggestions and Grumbles'

NW Care Group Limited recognises that making complaints may feel daunting and that "bureaucratic" processes are sometimes not welcomed by children. We also recognise that many issues are low-level problems that are easily resolved, and it may be quicker and easier to deal with them informally. For this reason, we have an informal complaints process.

Informal complaints can be made verbally, in writing, or by using the 'suggestions and grumbles box'. This is checked twice a day and recorded on the log.

When a complaint is put forward informally but is actually not low-level, then it will be dealt with as a formal complaint, even if the child initially thought it would be a 'grumble'.

Staff will be trained to recognise a complaint and will support a child in identifying and making a complaint.

- When receiving a complaint that they feel could be dealt with informally, the staff will discuss the issue with a manager or senior member of staff as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours. This is to ensure it is appropriate to deal with it under the informal processes.
- The member of staff will then get back to the child within the next working day to explain how the complaint will be dealt with.
- Where a complaint is low-level and easily resolved, a staff member will act to resolve it within two working days.
- Where it cannot be resolved within this 2-day timeframe due to practical or logistical issues, a staff member will return to the child within the 2-day timeframe and agree on an action plan and time scale for when it will be resolved.
- If the informal complaint involves another member of staff, it must always be discussed with a manager before any action is taken, and that member of staff should not be involved in the process.
- **If the complaint involves the manager, then this cannot be an informal complaint, and the appropriate process should be followed.**
- **Any complaint involving safeguarding issues cannot be informal. Safeguarding processes should be followed, and the complaint should be dealt with formally.**
- All complaints, both formal and informal, will be recorded in the complaints log and discussed with a manager as soon as possible.
- If the child is unhappy with how an informal complaint is resolved, they should be supported in making a formal complaint.

Examples of low-level complaints could be wanting to change the menus for meals, wanting to participate in a certain activity we do not offer, wanting to change the layout of their bedroom, wanting to change something on their care plan, wanting to sit in a different seat in the car, wanting to change the washing powder used for clothes etc.

## Formal Complaints

Upon admission, children are provided with information regarding how to complain and NW Care Group Limited's procedure to respond. They are also issued information about various other organisations that they may wish to contact; these include the Children's Commissioner, ChildLine, and NSPCC. This information is regularly refreshed, and staff will provide frequent opportunities for children to raise concerns and make complaints, such as in resident meetings and one-to-one sessions.

Formal complaints can be made either verbally or in writing. Verbal complaints will be dealt with in the same manner as written complaints, and a member of staff will gather as many details as possible verbally and put them into a written form on behalf of the child.

A blank complaints form can be found in the Children's Guide and in the allocated location next to the notice board, or it can be obtained by asking a member of staff. The completed form should then be given to a member of staff—it can be sealed if wished. Forms may also be posted into the 'suggestions and grumbles' box, which staff check twice a day.

When a complaint has been made formally but is actually low-level and would be better suited to be dealt with through the informal complaints process, the child will be explained why this may be a better process and how it could resolve their issue quicker. If the child agrees, it will be dealt with informally; otherwise, the formal process will continue.

All staff working at NW Care Group Limited are potential recipients of verbal complaints and will be trained to recognise them. Staff will support a child in identifying and making a complaint.

- When receiving a formal complaint, the priority is to consider whether it is related to any element of safeguarding. Any safeguarding concerns should be actioned immediately in line with the safeguarding

policy and referred immediately to the manager.

- All written complaints should be addressed (or forwarded) to the Registered Manager/Deputy Manager.
- All complaints will be acknowledged within one working day of receipt.
- The Registered Manager/Investigator will meet with the child within three working days of receiving the complaint.
- A review of the complaint will be considered, and further information will be sought if appropriate.
- All complaints will be investigated, and a written response given within 10 working days.
- If it is considered at the outset that the '10 working day response' target is unlikely to be met, a more realistic assessment will be made, and the complainant will be informed.
- The written response will address the issues raised in the complaint and provide information about what action (if any) has been taken or is to be taken by way of resolution.
- All complaints should be fully investigated and responded to, regardless of whether the child or young person wishes to retract them at any time.
- All substantiated complaints will be actioned where it is reasonable to do so.
- The manager will meet with the young person seven days after resolution to ensure they are satisfied.
- All complaints will be recorded in the complaints log.
- All records relating to the complaint, including copies of all correspondence, etc., will be saved in the log with relevant progress action and copied to the child's electronic file.
- No person who is the subject of a formal complaint may take any responsibility for consideration of a response to that complaint.
- No person will suffer any form of harassment or reprisal for making a complaint.
- Any complaint that is deemed as serious and involves a staff member working at NW Care Group Limited shall be referred to the LADO of the home local authority for guidance and reported to Ofsted as a Notification of Significant Events – this would be recorded as an Allegation rather than a complaint. Allegations will also be recorded on NW Care Group Limited's Complaint Register.
- The Manager must monitor complaints for patterns, and when a pattern is detected, they must address the issue even when the individual complaints themselves did not meet the threshold.
- The Manager must reflect on any 'Learning Issues' for the Service which have been identified as part of the complaint.
- The Manager shall maintain and provide to OFSTED, at its request, a record containing a summary of complaints made during the preceding 12 months and the action taken.

## **Recourse to Other Procedures**

If, during the course of a complaint being made, it becomes apparent that the issue being complained about potentially falls into Child Protection/Safeguarding or disciplinary action, then the complaints procedure will be suspended and appropriate procedures invoked by the responsible manager. Outcomes of Child Protection or Disciplinary Procedures should be notified to the Children's Complaints Manager to record on file and for inclusion in reporting on outcomes.

The Registered Manager, Adam Fletcher, must inform the children of the progress and outcomes of any matters dealt with by these procedures.

## **What to do if you are not satisfied?**

If the complainant or their representative is not satisfied, then they will be advised to refer the complaint, together with an explanation of why dissatisfaction remains, in writing to:

Registered Responsible Person

Paul Maguire

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NW Care Group Limited, Address: Westminster House, 10  
Westminster Street,  
Macclesfield, Cheshire, United Kingdom, SK10 1BX,  
Phone: 07823887125  
Email: [adamfletcher@nwcaregroup.co.uk](mailto:adamfletcher@nwcaregroup.co.uk) | Website:  
[nwcaregroup.co.uk](http://nwcaregroup.co.uk)

Reviewed: 15-07-2025  
Reviewed by: Adam

paulmaguire@nwccaregroup.co.uk

- A letter of acknowledgement will be sent within one working day.
- A review of the complaint/action taken will be considered, and further information sought if appropriate.
- The responsible individual will meet with the young person within three working days of receiving the complaint.
- A further written response will be provided within 10 working days of the completion of this process.
- The complainant will be kept informed if the "10 working day target" is likely to be missed.
- All substantiated complaints will be actioned where it is reasonable to do so.
- The manager will meet with the young person seven days after the resolution to ensure they are satisfied.

It is hoped that following further review and response, the complainant will be satisfied with the way the matter has been handled and the response given, and the matter will come to a close. However, if the complainant remains dissatisfied, then they should be referred to the placing authority and/or to OFSTED.

### **What if you don't want to take it to the responsible individual or you are not satisfied with their response?**

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome after following our full internal process or you do not wish to escalate the complaint to the Responsible Individual, you can complain to OFSTED.

The address to contact them is:

- **Ofsted**
- **Piccadilly Gate**
- **Store Street**
- **Manchester**
- **M1 2 WD**
- **0300 123 1231**

You can also contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman using the below details:

- **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**  
**PO Box 4771**  
**Coventry**  
**CV4 0EH**
- **0300 061 0614**

### **What if the Complaint is about the Registered Manager?**

If the complaint relates to NW Care Group Limited's Registered Manager, you should contact the responsible individual directly. They will act in place of the manager and follow the formal complaints process in the same way the manager would. They will act in the child's or their representative's best interests when addressing the complaint. .

### **Advocacy Services**

There may, on occasion, be a need for a complainant to use the services of an advocate in presenting/preparing their case, or the complainant may seek the support and assistance of their Social Worker. They can help you understand the complaints procedure and write your complaint if you do not want to ask the staff or you feel you want more support. Your social worker or the staff can help you find an advocate if you want one.

Young people are provided with their Local Authority Advocacy Service and the Independent Review Officer (IRO) contact details upon admission or as soon as the social worker provides them.

Some advocacy services that can help you are:

#### **National Youth Advocacy Service**

0808 808 1001

#### **Help at hand (Children's Commissioner)**

08005280731

#### **Child Law Advice (Coram)**

0808 800 5792

#### **Complaints from neighbours/local community/other services**

Anyone who wishes to make a complaint about the children living in the home or NW Care Group Limited itself that is not with regard to the care of a resident child, are not able to access the Children and Families Complaints Procedure as they are not making a complaint on behalf of children or delivery of a service. However, they are able to access the Council's Complaints Procedure.

The responsible manager should always attempt to resolve the complaint as quickly and early as possible. Staff should always inform the complaints manager of any complaints made by neighbours.

Any complaint received regarding NW Care Group Limited must be responded to as quickly as possible.

- Staff must remain professional and polite at all times.
- Staff must listen to the complaint and try to resolve it immediately.
- Staff must apologise for any disturbance or damage if any is caused.
- Staff must record the date, nature, and any action taken on the complaint and report it to the manager as soon as possible.
- Where the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, the registered manager has the responsibility of resolving all complaints and taking any reasonable action that is necessary to restore the confidence of the community in NW Care Group Limited.
- All such complaints will be logged in the complaints log.

#### **Safeguarding Children**

If any member of staff receives a complaint about the safety or safeguarding of a child, they should immediately refer the matter to the local safeguarding partnership.

- Name: TSSP
- Address:
- Main Telephone: 01619118687
- Out of hours:
- Email: [tssp@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:tssp@trafford.gov.uk)
- Website: [www.traffordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk](http://www.traffordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk)

All staff are trained, as part of the induction process, in:

- What constitutes a complaint.
- What the procedure is for dealing with an informal complaint in NW Care Group Limited and how it should be recorded.
- To whom a complaint is made outside NW Care Group Limited.
- The procedure to be followed should a complaint not be resolved promptly by informal means, including who should be notified and the keeping of records.
- How a child can be assisted in making a complaint, including situations where a child has a communication impairment, and how to access an advocate, interpreter or signer.

The induction training will be followed up with a specific session on complaints.

The Manager attends further training in dealing with and responding to complaints.

#### **IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

Children's Commissioner for England  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0800 528 0731 (freephone number)  
Email: [help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

#### **OFSTED**

Tel: 0300 123 1231  
E-mail: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[Ofsted Website](http://Ofsted.gov.uk)

#### **Childline**

Phone: 0800 111 111

Web: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

#### **Kidscape**

Phone: 08451 205 204  
Web: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

#### **Voice**

Phone: 0808 800 5792  
Web: [www.voiceyp.org](http://www.voiceyp.org)

#### **NSPCC**

Phone: 0808 800 5000  
Web: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

#### **The Children's Society**

Phone: 0845 300 1128  
Web: [www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)

## **Regulation 44 Visitor**

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 states Regulation 44 visits states that:

'The registered Person should actively seek independent scrutiny of NW Care Group Limited and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement'

Ofsted reviews the content of Regulation 44 reports to inform the next inspection and uses the information to decide whether further action is needed.

To comply with the statutory regulations the Visiting Officer must:

- Provide an opportunity for any child, parent or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish) to do so. (This links in with Standard 2 of the Quality Standards whereby the Visitor is ensuring that Children's wishes and feelings are heard).
- Check on the physical condition of the home.
- Form an opinion on the standard of care provided.
- Check the following records: Daily log, Complaints record, Sanctions record and Restraint record.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Registered Manager will check this policy is working properly and they will review it at least once a year. We will make improvements to the policy wherever we can.

Employees are invited to suggest any ways the policy can be improved.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

### **After reading this Policy, you should be able to:**

- Understand what Complaints Policy is and how the Complaints Policy operates;
- Understand how Complaints Policy operates at NW Care Group Limited and have an awareness of the actions we take in preventing, identifying and reporting concerns;
- Understand the role you play in Complaints Policy.

If you have not understood any of these points, please ask your Line Manager or trainer for further help

## **Policy Review**

A Director will review this policy at least once a year to make any updates needed.

## **Authorisation and Signature**

This Policy is the authorised version agreed by the Directors of NW Care Group Limited.

All employees are expected to follow this policy and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

