



Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedures

Purpose:	Author:
Setting out the compliments, comments and complaints policy and procedures for any service users of Adoption UK, whilst also supporting the person who is subject to the allegation.	Chief Operating Officer
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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out the compliments, comments and complaints policy and procedure for all those who use Adoption UK's services. It is the purpose of this policy to uphold the rights and interests of those raising issues, making complaints and allegations, whilst also supporting the person who is the subject of the allegation.

1. Adoption UK's approach to our membership and service users

Adoption UK always endeavours to provide a sympathetic, courteous and professional service to its membership and service users. Furthermore, we are always pleased to hear views and feedback on our services, so that steps can be taken to review and improve our services, as necessary. These views may be positive or negative and will be welcomed as constructive feedback on our work.

Adoption UK will ensure fair treatment by clearly applying this policy in response to all complaints that are made. Adoption UK will continue to offer high quality support without prejudice, regardless of any ongoing or previous complaint activity.

All complaints will be treated in strict confidence.

2. How to log a Compliment

We learn about the impact of our services in a number of ways. Adoption UK is keen to know what works well and we welcome positive feedback to inform our service development and delivery. If you would like to log a compliment in relation to our service, individual managers may be contacted directly if you have their details. If not, please contact the Adoption UK Head Office on 01295 752240 or email info@adoptionuk.org.uk. heading your correspondence 'COMPLIMENT.' We will ensure it is logged and that the relevant service is informed about your feedback. At times we like to anonymously share positive feedback with our wider colleagues and stakeholders. If you don't wish us to please just let us know and we will of course respect your views.

3. How to log your Comments

There are times when someone would like to raise an issue, or make comments about a service but it does not necessarily require a complaint. If you have a comment about an Adoption UK service, we want to hear from you. You can contact us verbally in person or over the phone, or in writing on social media, by email or by letter. Please contact the Adoption UK Head office on 01295 752240 and tell us you have a 'Comment' you wish to log, or email info@adoptionuk.org.uk. heading your correspondence COMMENTS.

We will make a record of your comments. The Manager will consider the comments raised and will attempt to resolve any issues by contacting you to discuss the matter further, seeking to find a solution within 7 working days.

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you are able to follow our complaints procedure below.

4. How to Make a Complaint

You can make an informal or a formal complaint. You can complain verbally in person or over the phone, or in writing on social media, by email or by letter.

Once you have made your complaint, you can choose to withdraw it at any point either verbally or in writing, and we will confirm in writing to you.

4.1. Informal Complaints Procedure.

The informal procedure is intended to be easy to use, quick and responsive about the complaint. In the first instance, please ask to speak to the relevant Manager within

Adoption UK. This will depend upon the particular Adoption UK service you have been using. If in doubt, then please contact the Adoption UK Head office on 01295 752240 or email info@adoptionuk.org.uk for clarification.

- The Manager will make a note of your name, contact details, Adoption UK membership number (where relevant), the nature of your complaint and the outcome that you would like to see. The Manager will attempt to resolve the complaint while speaking to you but may also arrange a time to call you back following further research into the matter.
- The Manager's response will address the following:
- An explanation of the circumstances surrounding the event which is the subject of the complaint.
- The reasons for any unsatisfactory service and, if appropriate, an apology
- What course of action will be taken to remedy any unsatisfactory service
- What you can do next if you are not satisfied with the response
- The above information will be confirmed in writing within seven days of the Manager informing you of the response to your complaint.

If you feel that the informal complaints procedure has not addressed your complaint satisfactorily, then please use the formal complaints procedure below. You can, of course, decide to use the formal complaints procedure at any point during the informal procedure.

4.2. Formal Complaints Procedure

If you have already used the informal complaints procedure, but are not satisfied with the outcome, then you should email info@adoptionuk.org.uk, marking your email clearly as a "Complaint" in the subject. Your email should give an explanation of why you feel your complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved and state what outcome you would like to see.

If this is the first time you are raising your complaint with us, write to the relevant Manager, email info@adoptionuk.org.uk or write to the Adoption UK Head office. Please mark your correspondence clearly as a "Complaint" and provide full details of your complaint, including the outcome you would like to see. Please also include your name and contact details and, where relevant, your Adoption UK membership number.

Where your complaint relates directly to the conduct or behaviour of the Registered Manager or Responsible Individual, this complaint will be dealt with in line with the regulations. Ofsted will be notified formally by the Chief Executive or the Chair of the Board. In notifying Ofsted, a plan for investigating and resolving the complaint will be constructed in partnership with Ofsted to ensure that best practice is adhered to. Where your complaint relates directly to the conduct or behaviour of the Chief Executive, the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees (see below for contact details). The complaint will then be dealt with in line with the procedures laid out below, except that it will be dealt with by the Chief Executive or Chair of the Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

The relevant manager will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days and respond to your complaint in full within 10 working days. During this time, the manager

will research and investigate all the issues raised in your letter. It may also be necessary to contact you during this time to clarify any information in your letter.

The manager's response will address the following:

- An explanation of the circumstances surrounding the event which is the subject of the complaint.
- The reasons for any unsatisfactory service and, if appropriate, a formal apology • What course of action will be taken to remedy any unsatisfactory service.
- What you can do next if you are not satisfied with the response.

4.3. Escalating a complaint

If you are not satisfied with outcome of your complaint, you should either email info@adoptionuk.org.uk, or write to the Adoption UK Head Office, marking your correspondence for the attention of the Chief Executive, stating the reasons why you are dissatisfied with the response from the Manager. The Chief Executive will decide whether to uphold the response of the relevant Manager and respond to your complaint within 10 working days. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the Chief Executive's response will address the reasons why you were dissatisfied with the Manager's response. The Chief Executive will not re-investigate the issues surrounding the complaint, unless there are clear points of disagreement or dispute. It is important that you highlight any such points.

If you are dissatisfied with the Chief Executive's response, please state this in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will make a decision about whether to address the complaint in a different way and will respond within 20 working days.

The Chair's response will address only the reasons why you were dissatisfied with the Manager's and/or Chief Executive's response. The Chair will not re-investigate the issues surrounding the complaint, unless there are clear points of disagreement or dispute. It is important that you highlight any such point. In all but exceptional circumstances, the Chair's decision regarding the complaint will be final.

In exceptional circumstances, if the complaint has not been resolved following the Chair's response, the Chair and Chief Executive may appoint an independent adjudicator to investigate your complaint. The identity of the independent adjudicator will depend upon the nature of the complaint. The adjudicator will be appointed within 28 days of receipt of your correspondence.

If appointed, the independent adjudicator will research and investigate all the issues raised in your correspondence (and any earlier correspondence) within a further 28 days, including the manner in which your complaint has been handled. It may be necessary for the independent adjudicator to contact you during this time to clarify any information in your correspondence. The independent adjudicator will prepare and present a report to both you and the Board of Trustees. The report will address the following:

- An explanation of the circumstances surrounding the event which is the subject of the complaint.
- The reasons for any unsatisfactory service and, if appropriate, whether a formal apology should be made.

- What course of action should be taken to remedy any unsatisfactory service

The Board of Trustees will act upon the independent adjudicator's findings, including making any necessary formal apology and implementing the recommended course of action to remedy the unsatisfactory service. It will also take into account any findings on how the complaint has been handled and ensure these are addressed in any future complaints handling. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will confirm all this in writing, within seven days of the Board's decision.

The independent adjudicator's response will be final, and no further correspondence will be entered into.

4.4. Finding help to make a complaint

You may wish to ask a friend, relative or supporter to help you with your complaint. Adoption UK will do all that it can to facilitate this and will be happy to deal with that supporter. However, all information and responses involved with the complaints procedure will be sent directly to you, unless you expressly instruct us otherwise.

5. Implementing our complaints policy

5.1. Safeguarding

Where a complaint or allegation is made with regards to an Adoption UK member of staff and these are of a safeguarding nature, even if they "appear on the face of it to be relatively insignificant"¹ these complaints and allegations will be handled following the Adoption UK Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and a referral will be made to the appropriate authority, including contacting the LADO (Local Area Designated Officer.) A flowchart of this process is included in the Safeguarding Procedure. This process is to be followed, even if the same allegation or complaint has been raised directly with the police, Children and Families Services or Adult Services.

A record of all such incidents will be recorded by the Chief Executive and maintained by the Human Resources Manager on the respective staff member's file. A copy of this report will be provided to the subject person as soon as the investigation has concluded. All

information will be retained on the confidential file, in alignment with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR,) and will be held on the file for 10 years or until the person reaches retirement age, whichever is sooner, irrespective of whether they continue to work or volunteer for Adoption UK.

This complaints policy will also be closely linked to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure in respect of the handling of complaints relating to the conduct or behaviour of staff and is intended to be compliant with Standard 22 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards, 2014 (Handling Allegations and Suspicions of Harm.)

¹ Standard 22, Adoption: National Minimum Standards

All allegations against Adoption UK staff will follow the framework for managing cases of allegations of abuse against people who work with children, as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

During an investigation of an allegation, a supporter will be offered to the person subject to the allegation. This supporter can be from within the organisation or if required a supporter independent from the organisation will be appointed.

5.2. Publicising our Complaints Policy

A line about our Complaints Policy will be incorporated into our membership and service user material and put on our Online Community to read:

“Contact us for details of our Complaints Policy.”

5.3. Monitoring and reviewing complaints

Adoption UK will ensure that all complaints are recorded accurately and in enough detail for decisions to be made. A complaints file will be opened – this will include:

- A chronology of events
- Statements by all relevant parties
- A record of all facts ascertained through the investigation.
- A record of all actions and decisions taken as a result of the investigation
- A record of all notifications to external authorities
- An outcome statement following the conclusion of the investigation.

We will keep a record of the number and type of complaints received in order to improve our services and processes and provide relevant training to staff, as appropriate.

Complaints records will be regularly reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team quarterly, and the Chief Executive will bring them to attention of the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

5.4. Malicious complaints

Adoption UK will accept any complaint in good faith. However, complaints made on the basis of discrimination, or malicious or vexatious complaints will not be tolerated.

In order to protect its employees, Adoption UK will investigate such complaints in a manner so as to expose any malicious intent. If persistent and unreasonable complaints are made which do not recognise reasonable attempts to resolve or correct the cause of the problem, Adoption UK will inform the complainant that it considers the matter closed, and may cease communication.

We recognise that these may be sensitive and subjective judgements and will record our reasoning. This will not apply to genuine complainants.

6. Contact details

You can contact us by email, letter or telephone using the details below.

Email: info@adoptionuk.org.uk.

Letter: Adoption UK Head Office; Bloxham Mill, Barford Road, Bloxham,
Oxfordshire, OX15 4FF

Telephone: 01295 752240

Individual managers may be contacted directly if you have their details. Otherwise please use the contact points above, marking your letter for attention of the manager, CEO or Chair as appropriate, and your complaint will be passed on to the appropriate person.

Please note that all complaints may be initiated by contacting the Chief Executive or Board of Trustees directly, however, dependent upon the nature of the complaint they may then progress through the appropriate complaints procedure above.

Any persons working for, engaged by or involved with Adoption UK who have any concerns about child welfare or safety in England or Wales, shall be entitled or able to contact the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) or The Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) respectively through their offices detailed below.

OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 123

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Notification:

<https://ofstedonline.ofsted.gov.uk/outreach/>

[Ofsted Statutory Notification.ofml](https://ofstedonline.ofsted.gov.uk/outreach/Ofsted_Statutory_Notification.ofml)

Care Inspectorate Wales

Rhydycar Business Park

Merthyr Tydvil

Wales

CF48 1UZ

Telephone: 0300 7900 126 option 2;

Email: CIW@gov.wales;

Care Inspectorate Wales publish the

following link on their website for those who wish to make a complaint about a

provider of services:

<https://careinspectorate.wales/contactus/raise-concern>

If you want further advice or you are still unhappy about your complaint, you can also contact The Charity Commission at <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

I confirm that I have read and understand the above Complaints Policy and Procedures:

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Employee Name:

Employee Title:

Signed:

Date:

Please return to your Line Manager or People Services as soon as possible.