

WORCESTERSHIRE  
**CHILDREN FIRST**

Fostering



**Worcestershire Children First**  
**Independent Fostering Agency**  
**Compliments and Complaints Policy**  
**2021 – 2023**

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**Description**

Complements and Complaints Policy to outline the processes for individuals to make a complement or complaint regarding Worcestershire Children First Independent Fostering Agency.

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Worcestershire Children First Fostering (WCFF) welcomes and encourages feedback, as this helps us to think of the services we provide and how we can improve them. Feedback can be made in writing, by e-mail, telephone or in person to any member of the team.
- 1.2. Information on how children and young people can make a compliment or complaint is in WCFF's Children's Guides.
- 1.3. Information on how foster carers can make a compliment or complaint is in their Foster Carer Agreement and they will receive a copy of this policy on approval or on request.

# 2. Compliments

- 2.1. While it is important to know when we are getting it wrong and not meeting expectations it is also useful to know when we are getting it right and making a difference to the life of a child or young person. WCFF can use this information to build on and develop good practice throughout the agency.
- 2.2. If people would like to submit a compliment, they either email the worker directly or their Team Manager or via the Worcestershire County Council website.

# 3. Complaints

- 3.1. WCFF are committed to delivering a high-quality service, but it is recognised that occasionally that service users may be disappointed with the service received.
- 3.2. Local authorities do not need to consider complaints made more than one year after the grounds to make the complaint arose. The time limit can be extended at the local authority's discretion if it would be unreasonable to expect the complainant to have made the complaint earlier.
- 3.3. The WCF Fostering Agency will:
  - Treat every complaint with the utmost of importance.
  - Ensure the complaint procedure is managed in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, under the governance and oversight of the Registered Fostering Manager.
  - Provide an opportunity for informal resolution at the earliest, as most problems can be solved by discussing them with the people who manage the service.

- If the complaint involves the Registered Manager of WCFF, it will be dealt with by the Responsible Individual for WCFF.
- The Registered Manager will ensure that a written record is made of any complaint or representation, the action taken in response to it, and the outcome of any investigation.
- The Registered Manager will analysis complaints on a quarterly basis and consider learning for the agency and how this will be feedback to staff.
- The Registered Manager will ensure that children are enabled to make a complaint or representation.
- No-one making a complaint will be treated adversely for making a complaint.
- The Registered Manager, on request, will supply the Chief Inspector with a statement containing a summary of any complaints made during the preceding 12 months and the action taken in response.
- Complaints will be dealt with within the timescales outlined further on in this policy. Where this is not possible this will be discussed with those making the complaint and a timescale agreed.
- Those making a complaint will be made aware are aware of the support available to help them make a complaint
- Where possible investigate anonymous complaints made anonymously and record the outcome where appropriate.

## 4. Who Can Make a Compliment / Complaint?

- 4.1. This procedure is for children and young people looked after by WCFF and their families, foster carers, prospective foster carers, members of fostering households or third parties making representations or complaints on their behalf with their written consent.

## 5. What Support Is Available?

- 5.1. Worcestershire Children First provides an Advocacy Service for children and young people who can support children and young people at any stage; [www.coramvoice.org.uk](http://www.coramvoice.org.uk)
- 5.2. WCFF has a contact with the Fostering Network's Advice and Medication service who will offer independent support and advice to foster carers; [infor@fostering.net](mailto:infor@fostering.net)

## 6. What Can Be Complained About?

6.1. Complaints can be made about anything related to the fostering task. Examples may include but are not limited to:

- The conduct of staff members or foster carers,
- The quality of care that a child or young person receives
- the quality of service or support to foster carers
- the delivery or non-delivery of a service

## 7. What Cannot Be Complained About Through This Procedure?

### 7.1. Allegations

If the Registered Manager considers the complaint to be an allegation against a member of staff or a foster carer, they will refer it immediately to the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) and it will be dealt with under the Safeguarding Policy.

### 7.2. Approvals and outcomes of assessments

Panel recommendations and Agency Decision Maker (ADM) decisions are covered by a separate procedure. If applicants or foster carers are unhappy with decisions on their approval, they will be informed in writing how they can appeal. This will include how to appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

### 7.3. Complaints relating to Worcestershire Children First.

If a foster carer makes a representation or a complaint on behalf of a child or young person relating to the service, the child or young person is receiving from Worcestershire Children First this will be considered through Worcestershire Children First Complaints procedure.

## 8. Informal Resolution

8.1. The Children Act 1989 requires that children's wishes, and feelings are considered, as are the views of parents and foster carers. If there are differences of opinion between any of these people WCFF would seek to address these as early as possible so that matters do not progress to a formal complaint.

- 8.2. If you are unhappy with the service provided, we hope that you will feel able to tell the person who is working with you. The Supervising Social Worker should discuss the complaint with those involved and the child and young person's social worker as appropriate and seek to resolve the issue.
- 8.3. As WCFF is part of Worcestershire Children First, children, young people and their families can choose to use Worcestershire Child First complaints procedure as an alternative to complaining to WCFF directly.
- 8.4. Where the Foster Carer is unhappy about the service they are receiving from their Supervising Social Worker or WCFF we would encourage them to discuss this with them to see whether any issue can be resolved.

## 9. Stage 1 Complaint Investigation

- 9.1. If it has not been possible to resolve the complaint informally then the complaint should be sent to the Registered Manager who will arrange with an Advanced social work practitioner to investigate the complaint. The Advanced social work practitioner will contact the person making the complaint to discuss the complaint and the outcome they are wanting. The Advanced social work practitioner will respond in writing to the person making the complaint within 10 working days with the outcome of the investigation. If it is not feasible to complete the investigation within that time a timescale will be agreed with the person making the complaint. Information will be provided in writing on how the person making their complaint can request a Complaint Review if they are not satisfied.
- 9.2. If the complaint is about the Registered Manager, the complaint should be sent to the Responsible Individual to investigate.

## 10. Stage 2 Complaint Review

- 10.1. The person making the complaint should notify the Registered Manager if they wish to escalate their complaint within 10 working days of the Stage 1 response. They should clearly explain why they remain unhappy and what outcomes they are seeking.
- 10.2. Stage 2 complaints will be investigated by the Registered Manager for WCFF
- 10.3. If the representation or complaint is about the Registered Manager, the Responsible Individual will identify an appropriate member of staff from Worcestershire Children First to review the complaint.

- 10.4. The Reviewing Manager will continue to look at ways to achieve resolution and if appropriate use mediation. The Reviewing Manager will arrange to meet with the person making the complaint within 5 working days to discuss why they remain unhappy and what outcomes they are seeking.
- 10.5. The Reviewing Manager will consider the areas of concern and reply to the person making the complaint in writing within 20 working days from the meeting giving the outcome of their review.

## 11. Contact Details

Responsible Individual	
Name:	Maria White
Position:	Responsible Individual – Worcestershire children First / Assistant Director – Safeguarding Services; Worcestershire Children First
Company:	Worcestershire Children First
Address:	County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR5 2NP
Email:	<a href="mailto:mwhite2@worcestershire.gov.uk">mwhite2@worcestershire.gov.uk</a>
Contact Number:	01905 846009 / 07833 436908
Registered Manager	
Name:	Laurie-Mo Gullachsen
Position:	Group Manager; Fostering Service
Company:	Worcestershire Children First
Address:	County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR5 2NP
Email:	<a href="mailto:lgullachsen@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk">lgullachsen@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk</a>
Contact Number:	01905 845509 / 07823327656

## 12. Further Action you can take?

12.1. At any time, you can contact the Chief Inspector at Ofsted.

Chief Inspector at Ofsted	
Position:	Chief Inspector Ofsted
Organisation:	Ofsted
Address:	Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
Contact Number:	0300 123 1231

12.2. Children and young people or people representing them can also contact The Office of the Children's Commissioner and/or The Office of the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner	
Organisation:	The Office of the Children's Commissioner
Address:	Sanctuary Building, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT
Contact Number:	0800 578 0731
Email:	<a href="mailto:Advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk">Advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk</a> .

The Office of the Local Government Ombudsman	
Organisation:	The Office of the Local Government Ombudsman
Contact Number:	<b>0300 061 0614</b>
Email:	<a href="http://www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-form">www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-form</a> .

12.3. All of the above organisations will have expected you to have gone through WCFE complaint's procedure with before contacting them and may ask for the information you have already supplied.