

Early Years - the organisation for young children

Feedback Policy for Early Year's Staff

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Feedback Policy

1.0 Introduction

Early Years welcomes feedback on any of its services and work. Feedback helps the organisation learn and improve with the goal of fulfilling our mission "to lead and innovate to ensure high quality shared early education and care services that support resilience for children, families and communities."

Feedback can be given to the organisation in three different ways

1. A compliment allows a client to recognise good work being carried out by the organisation or its staff – follow **compliments procedure** below.
2. A comment that allows a client to make a suggestion for new work or an improvement to existing work being carried out by the organisation – follow **comments procedure** below.
3. A complaint that allows a client to express dissatisfaction about the organisation's work – follow **complaints procedure** below.

2.0 Scope of this policy

This policy covers all the services and work carried out by Early Years - the Organisation For Young Children (Early Years) except for the Pathway Fund. For feedback related to the Pathway Fund the complainant should be directed to follow their policy.

3.0 Compliment Procedure

A member organisation or other client may wish to tell Early Years about a service that has been good or a member of staff who has been helpful. Early Years will facilitate compliments and ensure that the staff member (s) or service concerned is informed.

4.0 Complimenting Our Service

Compliments are valuable, welcomed and important and when they are received, either verbally or in writing, they will be recorded. Compliment enable Early Years to:

- understand that our service is being provided to the client's satisfaction
- provide positive feedback to and recognise our staff
- influence our organisational and service development
- inform our quality assurance programme

If a client wants to formally compliment Early Years staff members, or service they should be invited to email **info@early-years.org**.

Once the compliment has been received, the member of staff, team or service will be informed. If the compliment concerns an individual member of staff a copy will be placed on their supervision file.

5.0 Comments Procedure

It is always helpful to hear what people think about our organisation and the services we provide. Client's are very well placed to make useful comments about new or existing services. This could be:

- An idea about a new service or project that they would like the organisation to consider
- A suggestion to improve an existing service or area of work that isn't a complaint
- A Client who wishes to make a comment should be invited to send them by email to info@early-years.org.

Once a comment is received it will be passed on to the appropriate team for consideration. The appropriate line manager will update the client on the outcome of their comment.

6.0 Complaints Procedure

6.1 Definition of a complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction delivered in writing or orally, whether justified or not, from, or on behalf of a person or company, about Early Years.

7.0 Complaints procedure

Early Years is committed to providing its clients with the highest levels of service. However, we are aware that from time to time they may be unhappy with the service provided. We believe that complaints can help us see where our services or procedures might be improved, even if the client feels that their concern does not amount to a 'complaint', we still want to know about it.

8.0 Aim of the complaints procedure

1. To provide an effective means of allowing clients to complain about the quality or nature of services.
2. To ensure those complaints are acted upon and recorded.
3. To seek to resolve complaints quickly and as close to the point of service as is acceptable and appropriate.
4. To ensure that responses to complaints are informative and comprehensive.
5. To give management an additional tool to monitor the overall performance of Early Years and the extent to which its service objectives are being met.

9.0 Our standards for handling complaints

- Our intention should be to deal with all complaints fairly and with integrity. We should acknowledge when we have made a mistake and seek to address this in an open and transparent manner.
- Even where we find that the complaint has no basis we should attempt to resolve the issue in as positive manner as possible.
- Treat complainants with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times.
- We will not tolerate abuse of staff and staff are within their rights to refuse to deal with aggressive and rude complainants.
- Complaints will be dealt with in confidence and data kept in line with data protection legislation.
- Complainants will be treated in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy of Early Years.

10.0 Confidentiality

All complaints received must be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018, subject to the need to disclose information as required by statutory authorities and/or as a result of statutory, legal or parliamentary obligations placed on Early Years.

11.0 Record Keeping

A record of all complaints must be kept on the complaints register which will be managed by the Senior Executive Officer (SEO). Copies of all documentation associated with a complaint should be sent to the SEO once the complaints process has been completed. The SEO will use the information to complete the complaints register.

The purpose of this process is to ensure that a central register is kept and that Early Years has a record of information to use for learning and development. Please note that this process is for record keeping purposes only and does not form part of the complaints process itself.

All complaints records will be kept in accordance with the Early Years data management and record retention policies.

Annex 2 Complaints Register Template.

12.0 Complaints Procedure

12.1 Recognising a complaint

In many situations it will be obvious that a complaint is being made, for example when a client explicitly asks to lodge a complaint or submits written correspondence expressing dissatisfaction. However, some cases will be less straightforward. Staff should use the definition above to decide whether the issue should be treated as a complaint. If you believe it meets the criteria or if you are unsure the client should be informed of our complaints procedure and supported to access it **(See Annex 4).**

12.2 Identifying who is making a complaint

It is important that staff members can identify who is making the complaint. Early Years will not consider an anonymous complaint, and the complaints process will not commence until the name of the complainant is given.

Early Years is sometimes contacted by individuals who want to complain about a setting who is a member of Early Years. This is not a complaint about Early Years and therefore this procedure is not applicable. However, if the issue raises safeguarding concerns, regulatory implications or matters within our contractual oversight, these must be escalated in line with Early Years' safeguarding and governance procedures. All such interactions should be recorded for transparency and audit purposes. Any communication of this nature should be addressed by the appropriate line manager and escalated to the Chief Operating Officer (CoO) to agree the appropriate course of action to be taken.

Early Years is sometimes contacted by media outlets and political representatives. Unless this contact is associated to a complaint this should be

viewed as a communications issue and redirected to the Communication and Events Manager.

12.3 Handling informal complaints

If a complaint is raised directly with an Early Years staff member, they should make every reasonable effort to resolve the matter through the informal process. The staff member should aim to address the issue promptly, or, where more appropriate, ensure that another colleague with the relevant knowledge or responsibility takes it forward. The designated team member should contact the client directly preferably by telephone to discuss the concern and attempt to reach a resolution.

Although the informal process should be completed without delay, staff must still take the time necessary to:

- clarify the nature of the complaint
- check any relevant information or records
- seek guidance from their line manager where required

The informal stage should normally be completed within **two working days**. If, for legitimate reasons, it is likely to take longer, the client must be informed and provided with an updated timeframe. The informal process should be recorded on the Early Years Informal Complaint Form Annex 1.

If the issue is resolved to the satisfaction of the client, then you should

- Update the client CRM (where relevant)
- Report the matter to the relevant manager including an explanation of the resolution. Identify if there are any further actions that should be taken or lessons learnt from the complaint

If the matter is not resolved informally the client may proceed to the formal complaints procedure.

12.4 Formal Complaints

Stage 1: on initiation of the formal complaints procedure the team member receiving the complaint should make an official log of the complaint using the Early Years complaint form **Annex 2**.

- This form should be filled in as thoroughly as possible particularly the section on the content of the complaint. Details that should be included (not

exhaustive)

- Name of the complainant
- Contact details of the complainant
- Name of the Early Years staff member and/or service being complained about
- Date that the incident giving rise to the complaint occurred
- The complainant's description of the incident giving rise to the complaint (please include all detail as seen from their perspective)
- The Early Years staff involved in the incidents giving rise to the complaint
- Any other Early Years staff members who may have relevant information
- Any other relevant details

They should acknowledge the complaint by email to the client within two working days.

The team member should immediately inform the Manager of the service concerned that a complaint has been made and send on completed forms. The manager will direct an investigation into the complaint with the intention of:

- Gathering any relevant information
- Establishing the facts of the matter
- Deciding on a response to the complaint including who will contact the client
- The manager should inform the Chief Operating Officer (COO) that a formal complaint has been made.

The results of this process should be documented on the Early Years complaint form.

At this point contact will be made with the client and the response outlined. If this response resolves the matter, then the complaint form will be completed including the sections on further action and or lessons learned.

Timescale from receipt of the complaint to the contact to attempt resolution should be carried out as quickly as possible but take no longer than 5 working days.

Stage 2: If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 1 then the client should be informed that they can move to Stage 2 (Appeal) of the process.

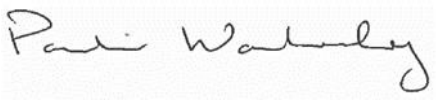
The COO will be informed immediately that the complaint has moved to Stage 2.

The COO should carry out an investigation of the complaint including:

- A review of all the information included in Stage 1.
- Considering any other information, they believe may be relevant.
- If appropriate contacting the complainant to gather further information.
- Deciding on a response to the client. The response may be to endorse the finding of Stage 1 or it may overturn in full or in part the findings of Stage 1.
- The COO will contact the client to outline their response to the complaint.
- The client will be informed that whether resolved or not that this is the final stage in the complaints process and the complaint will be closed.
- The COO will document the process above in the Early Years complaint form Annex 2.
- The COO will ensure the Chief Executive Officer is advised of the outcome of the investigation.

Timescale from passing through Stage 2 to the contact to attempt resolution should be carried out as quickly as possible but take no longer than 10 working days.

APPROVED **DATE**



14 April 2026

Pauline Walmsley

Chief Executive Officer

Annex 1 - Informal Complaint Form

Section A – Complainant Details

- **Name of person making complaint: _____**
- **Setting concerned (if applicable): _____**
- **Address: _____**
- **Telephone number: _____**
- **Email address: _____**
- **Preferred method of contact (if indicated):_____**
- **Date informal complaint lodged: _____**

Section B – Complaint Information

- Record the nature of the complaint as provided by the client, clarify the detail provided.
- Seek guidance from the relevant line manager to follow through with Stage 1 of informal process.

- **Summary of follow up discussion with the claimant**
- **Document any recommendations**

Section D – Response

- **Response provided to complainant (include date):**
- **Has the response resolved the issue?**
    - ☐ Yes → Complete this form and forward to SEA.
    - ☐ No → Escalate to Stage 2 Formal Process and pass to Manager immediately.

Section E – Sign-Off

- **Name and job title of person investigating complaint:**
- **Signature: _____**
- **Date: _____**

Annex 2 - Formal Complaints Form

Section A – Complainant Details

- **Name of person making complaint: _____**
- **Setting concerned (if applicable): _____**
- **Address: _____**
- **Telephone number: _____**
- **Email address: _____**
- **Preferred method of contact (if indicated): _____**
- **Date complaint escalated to Stage 2: _____**

Section B – Background

- **Summary of Stage 1 complaint and outcome:**
- **Reason for escalation to Stage 2:**

Section C – Nature of Complaint (Stage 2)

- **Detailed description of the complaint (include all relevant information):**
- **Details to be included (not exhaustive):**
    - Name of the complainant
    - Contact details of the complainant
    - Name of the Early Years staff member and/or service being complained about
    - Date(s) of incidents giving rise to the complaint
    - Complainant's description of the incident(s)
    - Early Years staff involved in the incident(s)
    - Any other Early Years staff members who may have relevant information
    - Any other relevant details

Section D – Investigation

- **Investigation undertaken by (Manager or appointed person): _____**
- **Date investigation commenced:_____**
- **Summary of investigation findings: _____**
- **Recommendations arising from investigation: _____**

Section E – Response

- **Response provided to complainant (include detail, formal records of correspondence, attachments, date):**

  Complete this form and forward to SEO.

Section F – Sign-Off

- **Name and job title of person investigating complaint:**
- **Signature: _____**
- **Date: _____**

NOTE: *Should the process be escalated to Stage 2 of the Formal Complaints Process the COO should ensure that any additional relevant information is collated and a report compiled using this template*.

Annex 3: Early Years Complaints Register (template)

Name of Complainant	Date of Complaint	Service/person subject of Complaint	Brief description of nature of complaint	EY staff handling complaint and at which level	At what level was the complaint resolved (if not resolved enter not resolved)	Brief Description of outcome	Date Complaint process completed whether resolved or not

Please note: this register will be held centrally by the CEO office

Annex 4

How to make a complaint

Complaint Process

Introduction

Early Years, the Organisation For Young Children (Early Years) is committed to providing its clients with the highest levels of service. However, we are aware that from time to time they may be unhappy with the service provided. To deal with this, we have a Complaints Procedure. We believe that complaints can help us see where our services or procedures might be improved, even if the client feels that their concern does not amount to a 'complaint', we still want to know about it. This document sets out how you can make a complaint about the services of Early Years.

Scope of this policy

This policy covers all the services and work carried out by Early Years except for The Pathway fund. For a complaint related to the Pathway Fund the complainant should be directed to follow their complaints policy.

Definition of a complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction delivered in writing or orally, whether justified or not, from, or on behalf of a person or company, about the services of Early Years

Aim of the complaints procedure

1. To provide an effective means of allowing clients to complain about the quality or nature of services.
2. To ensure those complaints are acted upon and recorded.
3. To seek to resolve complaints quickly and as close to the point of service as is acceptable and appropriate.
4. To ensure that responses to complaints are informative and comprehensive.
5. To give management an additional tool to monitor the overall performance of the fund and the extent to which its service objectives are being met.

A copy of this procedure is available on the Early Year's website

How to make a complaint

Informal complaints

Step 1: Raise your concern with the member of Early Years staff closest to the service you wish to complain about.

Step 2: If you're unsure who to approach, you may speak to any member of Early Years staff.

Step 3: The staff member will:

- Try to resolve your complaint immediately, or
- Pass the matter to a more appropriate colleague.

Step 4: A colleague will contact you within two working days of raising the issue.

Step 5: If resolved at this stage, no further action will be taken.

Please note: Early Years may keep a record of your complaint to help improve services.

Formal complaints

You may make a formal complaint verbally or in writing, contact details are provided below:

- **Telephone Early Years HQ**: 028 9066 2825
- **Email:** info@early-years.org

Stage 1 – Initial Investigation

Step 1: The staff member who receives your complaint will log the details, including:

- Date of complaint
- Your contact information
- Nature of the complaint

Step 2: You will receive an acknowledgement within 2 working days**:**

- If made verbally or by telephone and acknowledgement will be sent by email
- If made by email an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent

Step 3: The Manager (or another appropriate staff member) of the service you complained about will carry out an investigation.

- They may contact you to gather further information.

Step 4: At the end of the investigation, a staff member best placed to resolve the issue will contact you.

Step 5: You will be contacted by phone (or email if you request this) within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.

Stage 2 – Appeal

Step 1: If you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, you may request that your complaint be taken further.

Step 2: At this stage, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Early Years will become involved.

Step 3: The COO will review:

- The original complaint
- The Stage 1 investigation and resolution attempt
- Any other relevant information

Step 4: The COO may contact you to gather further details if needed.

Step 5: The COO will then contact you with the intention of reaching a resolution.

- This contact will usually be made within 10 working days of the complaint moving to Stage 2.

Please note: *If the complaint is particularly complex or requires lengthy investigation, timescales may be extended*.

This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

Standards for Handling Complaints

- You will be treated with courtesy, respect, and fairness at all times.
- Staff expect the same courtesy, respect, and fairness from complainants.
- Complaints will be handled confidentially within the organisation.
- All complainants will be treated in line with Equal Opportunities policies.

Confidentiality

- Complaints are managed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
- Information may only be disclosed when required by statutory authorities or legal obligations.

For reference, the Complaints Procedure flowchart is available at ***Annex 5.***

Annex 5: Complaints Procedure flowchart

