KIDS Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure

A short guide for parents and carers

1. KIDS values in action

KIDS places a strong emphasis on providing the highest quality service possible. However, we realise that sometimes we get things wrong and that not everyone will be happy or agree with what we do.

We welcome and value all feedback, positive and negative, as this enables us to listen, learn and improve what we do and how. In short, your compliments, comments and complaints help us continue to improve and develop the services we offer to children, young people and their families.

This guide describes how you can make a compliment, comment or complaint about KIDS. You can get a full copy of KIDS Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedures by asking a member of staff.

2. What things mean

* A **compliment** is defined as *“a statement of positive recognition or praise”.*
* A **comment** (or suggestion) is defined as *“a remark, observation or criticism that may require immediate action but does not require a full investigation”.*
* A **concern** may be defined as*“a worry or something that might bother someone about a service and where advice might be needed for a resolution.”*
* We define a **complaint** as *“an expression of dissatisfaction, however made about actions taken or a lack of action by KIDS, or someone acting on behalf of KIDS.”*

3. Complimenting and Commenting on our people or work

Compliments and comments are welcome because they:

* help to influence the organisational decisions we may make;
* help maintain the standards of our activities;
* raise issues of real importance and can lead to change for the better.

You can make a compliment or comment about KIDS at any time and in a number of ways:

* In person or by telephoning a member of staff or manager
* In writing such as email, letter, via KIDS Enquiries on the website or by completing a Comments or Suggestions slip / card.
* Routine feedback methods such as survey questionnaires, service review meetings or quality monitoring visits.

Wherever we can, we will record and report on compliments and comments we receive – both internally and where required externally.

We will endeavour to acknowledge compliments and comments wherever possible but whilst this may not always be practicable, please be assured that they are always appreciated.

4. Complaining about our people or our work

We recognise that there will be times when our trustees, staff and volunteers or third parties working on our behalf make mistakes, or get things wrong. Where this happens and where we receive a concern or complaint, we will always take this seriously, record and report on it internally and externally if required, and deal with it in a timely manner.

We will always take steps to maintain the confidentiality of your personal information. We will only disclose it to people who need to look into your complaint, and, rarely, to others where we are legally permitted to do so.

5. Who can complain?

Anyone who is:

* Receiving a service from KIDS;
* Caring for someone who has a complaint;
* Has been refused a service which they think they may need;
* Members of the general public.

6. What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

* the quality and standard of any service we provide
* failure to provide a service
* the suitability of our centres, facilities or resources
* unfair treatment or inappropriate behaviour of staff
* conduct of other children, young people or parent carers
* administration processes such as referral to services or invoicing

Your complaint may involve more than one aspect of the above, more than one department, or be about someone working on our behalf.

7. What can’t I complain about?

There are some things we can’t deal with through our complaint handling procedure. These include:

* a subject access request under Freedom of Information or Data Protection legislation
* an information breach
* an issue which is being, or has been, considered by a court or tribunal
* an attempt to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following an investigation.

We will not normally treat information received through routine feedback mechanisms - such as responses to questionnaires - as formal complaints but will follow any issues up and attempt to resolve these with you.

If other procedures or rights of appeal may help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you and/or refer you to the relevant KIDS policy and procedures.

8. Can KIDS refuse to deal with my complaint?

Under certain circumstances we may not be able to respond to a complaint including where:

* you have not identified yourself or provided your contact details;
* your complaint is not about KIDS
* your expression of the complaint is insufficiently clear;
* your complaint has been sent to us and other organisations as part of a bulk mailing or email.

However, KIDS will still take the complaints seriously and deal with them appropriately, including contacting you where we are able to, to discuss the matter further.

We may restrict or deny further access to the complaint handling procedure if we consider your behaviour or that of your representative to be aggressive, abusive or unreasonable. We will make reasonable adjustment for a disability and will take this into account before making any decision to restrict or deny further access to the complaint handling procedure.

If we feel it is necessary to restrict or deny you or a representative access to the complaint procedure, we will advise you of this in writing. Reasonable attempts will be made to complete the investigation of your complaint, though contact with you or your representative may be restricted.

Please note: KIDS reserves the right to move any legal, statutory or employment matters out of the complaints procedure and deal with these under the relevant internal KIDS policy and procedures.

9. How do I complain?

You can complain in person, by phone, in writing, or by email. It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you raise them as soon as you become aware of the issue, and directly to the service or department concerned. Please talk to a member of staff or manager within the region and department you are complaining about so that they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us:

* your full name and address
* as much as you can about the complaint
* when the issue happened (dates)
* what has gone wrong
* how you would like us to resolve the matter.

10. Is there a time limit for making a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within **six months** of the issue arising, or finding out that you have a reason to complain. In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to

accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

11. Can someone complain on my behalf?

Yes. We understand people are not always able or willing to complain for themselves. We will accept complaints from a third party representative:

* where it is known the service user has consented and given written authority to KIDS for the third party to act on their behalf;
* where the service user cannot complain unaided and cannot give consent because they lack capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005;
* the representative is acting in the service users best interests – for example, where the matter complained about, if true, would be detrimental to the service user.

Third parties **must not** be a legal representative of the individual making a complaint.

12. What will happen if I complain?

Our complaint procedure has three stages:

Stage 1 - Frontline Resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem. Where possible, you should raise your concerns with the relevant staff member. This can be done face-to-face, by phone, in writing or by email.

* We will acknowledged Stage 1 complaints within three working days
* We will give you our decision at Stage 1 within fourteen working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to Stage 2 of the complaint procedure. You may choose to do this immediately or shortly after you get our initial decision.

Stage 2 - Complaint Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. We have a complaint form, which will help you to state your complaint clearly to us. We will support you with this and accept complaints that are made in person or on the phone. We will provide you will a written summary of the complaint to ensure we have understood it correctly. The complaint form and any supporting documents will be seen by the person investigating your complaint and by relevant staff in the department(s) being complained about.

When using Stage 2 we will:

* acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days and tell you who is dealing with your complaint
* discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
* give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 28 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 28 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

Stage 3 – Appeals and Escalation

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint or the way it was handled you can request that the complaint and any decision made about it is reviewed. The review will be undertaken by a member of KIDS Executive Leadership Team.

You will be invited to attend the review meeting, and you are welcome to bring a friend or relative with you, but not your legal representative.

The review will send you a copy of its recommendations, and KIDS Board of Trustees will receive a confidential summary of your complaint in order to monitor how the complaints procedure is working.

13. Can I take my complaint elsewhere?

Yes. If you are not happy with the way KIDS has managed your complaint or the outcome, you can contact the following organisations. You will be given details of these in the *Complaint Decision Letter* you will receive from KIDS.

* **Local Authority or organisation funding your service.**
* **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)** for services commissioned or funded by a public body such as a Local Authority or National Health Service.

The LGSCO provides a free, independent service. The LGSCO Intake Team can be contacted for information and advice, or to register your complaint:

T: 0300 061 0614

W: [www.lgo.org.uk/adult-social-care/](http://www.lgo.org.uk/adult-social-care/) (there are links to an enquiry form and a complaint form on this page)

Write to: The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH

The LGSCO will not usually investigate a complaint until the provider has had an opportunity to respond and resolve matters.

* **Care Quality Commission (CQC) General Enquiries** if you or your children are receiving support within the home for health and personal care needs (domiciliary care).

Telephone: 03000 616161

Fax: 03000 616171

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/contact-us>

* **Ofsted General Enquiries** If your children are being supported by KIDS early years, play and leisure or overnight residential services. Telephone: **0844 248 1747**.
* **Fundraising Regulator** to complain about the way you’ve been asked for donations or how fundraisers have behaved. [www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/complaints](http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/complaints)
* **Charity Commission** – for any other types of complaint you have that are not covered by any of the above organisations. [www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity)

14. Getting help to make your complaint

We are committed to making our service easy to use. In line with our equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another format, such as large font or Braille, please let us know. You can contact us by emailing enquries@kids.org.uk . KIDS will also provide details of independent Advocacy Services who can support you in sharing a complaint with us.

KIDS Complaints Handling Procedure – One Page Summary

**Complaints Procedure**

You can make a complaint in person, by phone, post, email or by completing a Customer Complaints Form on the KIDS website. You can also have someone complain on your behalf if you put this in writing.

We have a 3 Stage complaint process. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly but if the matter will need a detailed investigation we will let you know and up-date you on our progress.

**Stage 1: Front line Resolution**

We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and try to resolve it quickly, within 14 working days, if we can.

If you are not happy with our response or the way we handled your complaint you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.

**Stage 2: Complaint Investigation**

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are not happy with our decision at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage if it is clear they are complex or serious or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days. We will give you a decision as soon as possible. This will be no more than 28 working days *unless* there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

**Stage 3: Appeals and Escalation**

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint or the way is was handled you can request the complaint and decision is reviewed by KIDS Executive Leadership Team.

If, after receiving our final decision you remain unhappy with either our decision or the way we handled it, you can take the matter to an external organisation for consideration such as the local authority, Local Government Social Care Ombudsman, CQC, Ofsted or Charity Commission.

We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.