

## Home-Start Richmond upon Thames

### Policy: Complaints Procedure

The Board of Trustees recognise that it is essential for families being visited by Home-Start Richmond co-ordinators and/or volunteers to be able to make complaints about the service and to have their complaints considered. Each family should therefore be given a Welcome to Home-Start leaflet which outlines the support Home-Start offers and gives information about what to do if dissatisfied with it.

Every attempt will be made to resolve minor complaints by discussion orally with the scheme manager or senior co-ordinator. These complaints will be recorded in the family's file, giving full details of the nature of the complaint and will be dated. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the scheme manager or senior co-ordinator will also speak to the other party (e.g. volunteer/co-ordinator) and record his/her comments in the same way. If the matter is not resolved orally, or if it appears too serious to be resolved that way, the complaints procedure will be implemented as it will be for all complaints received in writing as follows:

#### Stage One

- a) For the complaints procedure to be implemented a complaint must be made in writing; either by letter or on the Complaints form available from the Home-Start Office.  
A member of a family wishing to make a complaint should be assisted, if needed, by the volunteer, co-ordinator or scheme manager to formulate and express the complaint: but they must not insist on assisting with the complaint.  
Staff must not refuse to accept a complaint.
- b) The letter or completed *Complaints form* should be sent or handed in to the Home-Start Office.
- c) On receipt of the complaint, the scheme manager shall acknowledge receipt of it, and shall send a copy to the chairperson. If the complaint is a letter, attach to a *Complaints form* and complete details on the form. A *Record of complaint form* should also be started and given the same Complaint Number.
- d) The Scheme manager shall consider what steps are appropriate in responding to the complaint; these may include problem solving, conciliation and/or negotiation. The chairperson shall be informed of the

proposed response and shall agree to it or discuss alternative responses with the Scheme manager. A response to the complainant should be given without delay and the expectation is that this stage of the procedure should be completed in most cases within two weeks.

- e) The details of the response and the outcome of the way in which the complaint was considered shall be recorded with the written complaint.
- f) Written responses must be sent in all cases to the complainant. Further information shall be included in the written response outlining the further steps in the Procedure, which can be taken if the response is not satisfactory to the complainant.

If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome, no further action need be taken as far as the complainant is concerned.

### **Stage Two**

If the complainant is not satisfied or wishes from the start when making the written complaint to have it more formally considered, the following procedure shall apply:

- a) On receiving a reply to the response that is does not satisfy the complainant, or on receipt of the written complaint that the complainant wishes to go straight to this stage, the Scheme manager shall acknowledge receipt of the reply or of the written complaint, send a copy to the chairperson and record the date it was received on the *Record of complaint* form.
- b) The chairperson decides on a member of the Board of Trustees who shall further investigate the complaint independently of the Scheme manager and chairperson. Depending on the nature of the complaint and its seriousness, s/he may be joined in the investigation by another member of the Board of Trustees or by another person nominated by Home-Start (UK) who may be a member of the Home-Start (UK) staff.
- c) A written report of the independent investigation shall be made and recorded with the written complaint and a copy sent to the chairperson.
- d) A further response to the complainant shall be drawn up taking into account the report of the investigation and shall be made in writing by the investigator to the complainant.
- e) If the complainant is satisfied with the result of the investigation and the further response, no further action need be taken as far as the complainant is concerned.

Stage Two shall be completed within four weeks of the commencement of the Stage.

### Stage Three

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response drawn up after the investigation, the following procedure shall apply:

- a) The continued dissatisfaction of the complainant should be submitted in writing and should be recorded. If sufficient reason for the dissatisfaction is not included in the written paper, more details of the reasons should be sought from the complainant and recorded.
- b) A Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees should be called and at least one member of the Home-Start (UK) staff shall be present at the meeting. Each member of the Management Committee shall receive a file of written papers concerning the complaint. The chairperson, scheme manager and those engaged in the investigation shall attend for the purpose of reporting and giving information but, in the interests of natural justice, shall leave the meeting before any discussion as to the decision to be taken. The chair for the meeting should be taken either by the vice chairperson or another person not engaged in the investigation and elected for the purpose.
- c) A written response shall be drawn up as a result of any decision taken at the Special Meeting by the person who chaired the meeting and that response shall be recorded with the written complain and sent to the complainant.
- d) The Special Meeting shall be called within four weeks of the commencement of this Stage and the response shall be sent to the complainant within one week after the meeting.

This marks the end of the Complaints Procedure.

**Date** .....

**Signed** ..... **Chairman**

**Review Date**

**Home-Start Richmond**  
**Complaints form**  
(to be completed by the complainant)

Home-Start Richmond upon Thames	Complaint Number (to be completed by Home-Start):
Name and Address of Complainant:	If the Complainant is acting on behalf of another member of a family, please give the name and address of that person.
Name:	Name:
Address, including post-code:	Address, including post-code:
Telephone Number:	Telephone Number:
Details of complaint:	
(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

When completed this form should be sent to:

Scheme Manager  
Home Start Richmond  
Parkway House  
Sheen Lane  
East Sheen  
SW14 8LS

**Home-Start Richmond**  
**Record of Complaint**  
(to be completed by the scheme manager)

<b>Home-Start Richmond upon Thames</b>		Complaint Number:
Name and Address of Complainant:		
<b>Nature of Complaint</b>		
Unhappy about staff or volunteer's attitude		
Lack of care and attention by staff or volunteers		
Racial discrimination		
Lack of response to requests or messages		
Other (specify)		
<b>Stage One</b>		<b>Dates</b>
Complaint received		
Complaint acknowledged		
Complaint recorded		
Copy to chairperson		
Written response sent to complainant		
<b>Stage Two</b>		<b>Dates (*or names)</b>
Reply to response received		
Reply acknowledged		
Reply recorded		
Copy to chairperson		
Investigation commenced		
Name(s) of person(s) investigating complaint		*
Investigation completed		
Written response sent to complainant		
<b>Stage Three</b>		<b>Date</b>
Written dissatisfaction received		
Written dissatisfaction acknowledged		
Written dissatisfaction recorded		
Copy to chairperson		
Special meeting - notices sent		
Special meeting - date held		
Stage three written response sent to complainant		

### Complaints procedure flow diagram

