



## Home-Start in Suffolk (hereafter called Home-Start)

### Complaints Policy and Procedure

#### INTRODUCTION

Home-Start in Suffolk views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as an opportunity to put things right for the complainant.

#### POLICY STATEMENT

Home-Start is committed to developing the quality of its services. The Complaints Procedure enables referrers, other stakeholders (e.g. volunteers) and families being supported by Home-Start to make complaints about the service and to have their complaints considered.

A complaint, in the context of the Procedure, means: *'the expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided and the wish to have that dissatisfaction recorded and/or considered for improvement of the service and for the removal of dissatisfaction'*.

#### PROCEDURE

##### Who this procedure does not relate to

- a) Employees of Home-Start: The Complaints Procedure is separate and distinct from the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures which enables employees to raise grievances in connection with their condition of employment and other employment-related matters.
- b) The Disciplinary Procedure: is used by the employer when an employee may be in breach of the terms of employment. However, an investigation of complaints may lead to disciplinary issues.

##### Responsibility of staff and volunteers

Home-Start staff and volunteers need to be sensitive and helpful to the complainant, and those acting on their behalf, who express a concern. This is part of Home-Start's commitment to a high quality service. Staff should give information about the Complaints Procedure and help complainants to understand and use it.

Staff and volunteers must advise anyone who feels that they may have been subject to any discrimination that they also have the right to use the provisions of the [Equality Act 2010](#). **There should be no delay in giving this information since there is a three month time limit for making a submission for a claim under the Act.** However, it is up to the person concerned to decide whether to use that process and to take specialist advice before proceeding.

The leadership team is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Complaints Procedure for claims regarding employees & volunteers, unless specifically requested by the complainant to be handled by a trustee.

If a complaint is related to the Senior Manager, a designated trustees will be the main point of contact until after an investigation is complete.

#### Time Frame and Recording Requirements

1	Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be informed about this procedure and will be sent a complaint form (appendix 1). If a letter of complaint has been received (electronically/hardcopy) this will be attached to a complaint form
2	All complaints received will be acknowledged <b>within 5 working days</b> and a copy sent to the chair of the trustee board. All complaints will be recorded on the Complaints record form (Appendix 2) and retained.
3	The Chair of trustees will review the complaint and action an investigation before responding to the complainant <b>within 10 working days</b> . Further updates will be sent at <b>10 working day intervals</b> should the investigation require more time.
4	If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they will have <b>15 working days</b> to lodge an appeal. Acknowledgement of appeal will be sent <b>within 5 working days</b> . A panel of trustees excluding the chair will be appointed to review the appeal. The timescale of resolving the appeal will be confirmed to the complainant. (Trustee panel should aim to provide a response/holding message <b>within 10 working days</b> ).
5	The result of investigation sent to complainant and recorded on Appendix 3 and will be retained on file as per GDPR policy
6	All complaints received should be reported to the full board of trustees.

This policy adopted: .....23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023.....(date)

Date policy to be reviewed: ....February 2026..... (date)

Signed (Chair)....  .....Name: Rob Thacker



## Appendix 2

To be completed by the relevant person in the local Home-Start (usually the Home-Start manager or senior organiser/co-ordinator).

Home-Start _____		Complaint No.:
Name and Address of Complainant		
Content of Complaint Brief summary of complaint – attach written correspondence if available		
<b>Stage One</b>		Dates
Complaint received		
Complaint acknowledged		
Complaint recorded		
Copy to chairperson		
Written response sent to Complainant		
<b>Stage Two (if applicable)</b>		Dates (*or name)
Reply by complainant to response received		
Reply acknowledged		
Reply recorded		
Copy to chairperson		
Investigation commenced		
Name(s) of person(s) investigating complaint		*
Investigation completed, outcome recorded		
Written response sent to Complainant		

### Appendix 3

To be completed if complainant still dissatisfied after outcome of investigation: Meeting of trustees - final response sent to complainant after meeting.

Home-Start	Complaint No.:
Name and Address of Complainant	
Written dissatisfaction acknowledged	
Written dissatisfaction recorded	
Copy to chairperson	
Trustee meeting - notices sent	
Trustee meeting - date held	
Written response sent to Complainant	