

Responding to Complaints about Your Childcare Provision

A complaint can be defined as:

- Any expression of dissatisfaction received from a parent, carer, or member of the public about a childminding or childcare service – including a complaint made by a parent to an inspector during an inspection.
- Any expression of dissatisfaction received from a practitioner working at the provision.

The Early Years Foundation Stage requirements

The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) require:

- Childcare providers to put in place a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and/or carers, and keep a written record of any complaints, and their outcome. Childminders are not required to have a written procedure for handling complaints, but they must keep a record of any complaints they receive and their outcome. All providers must investigate written complaints relating to their fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted or the relevant childminder agency on request.
- Providers must make available to parents and/or carers details about how to contact Ofsted or the childminder agency with which the provider is registered as appropriate, if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. If providers become aware that they are to be inspected by Ofsted or have a quality assurance visit by the childminder agency, they must notify parents and/or carers. After an inspection by Ofsted or a quality assurance visit by their childminder agency, providers must supply a copy of the report to parents and/or carers of children attending on a regular basis.

It is an offence not to provide Ofsted, as the regulatory authority, with details of complaints if this is requested under a Welfare Requirements Notice. Records of complaints must be kept for at least three years.

Why investigate complaints?

A person using a service provided by another has the right to expect that the assured level of quality will apply at all times and that they have a right of redress if something goes wrong or the assured quality is not maintained.

Some complaints may seem trivial, while others have more serious implications. If something seems to be wrong within any aspect of the service a child and family is receiving, then it is important that the facts are identified and that measures are taken to rectify the situation and restore confidence. A formal complaints procedure assures service users of transparency, and that all complaints will be treated fairly and with equal credibility and concern. It gives a consistent message to all that says 'if, for any reason you are not happy about what we provide, or an aspect of it, this is the way for you to make that known and this is how we will listen and respond'.

Some providers may worry that a formal complaints procedure and details of complaints being made available for parents to see may look bad for their business. The opposite is true. Nothing is 100% right all of the time, no matter how hard people try. Responding openly to complaints acknowledges that no-one is infallible and by identifying where something has gone wrong there is an opportunity to evaluate and reflect, which in turn improves quality and good practice. This restores confidence on the part of the user of the service and adds to the credibility and honesty of the service provider.

Summary Record of Complaints Received

Name of provider:

Date of complaint:

Ofsted/childminder agency complaint number (if app):

Source of complaint:

Parent (in person)

Parent (phone call)

Parent (in writing)

Practitioner

Anonymous

Other, please state

Nature of complaint:

According to the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements:

Child protection

Staff:child ratios

Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment

Suitable people

Health

Special educational needs

Staff qualifications, training, support and skills

Managing behaviour

Information and records

Key person

According to the Learning and Development Requirements and Assessment Requirements:

Areas of learning and development

Assessment arrangements

Please write brief details of the complaint: