

Home-Start Northampton

Procedure: Complaints procedure

The Home-Start Agreement states:

'From the models in the Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide all in Home-Start must adopt policies on . . . complaints procedure.'

Openness to comments and complaints provides information about how Home-Start's work is carried out. It can assist the volunteers, staff and board of trustees to be more sensitive to a family's needs.

Objects of the complaints procedure

The Complaints Procedure enables 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'.

Relationship with the grievance and disciplinary procedures

The Complaints Procedure is separate and distinct from the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.

The Grievance Procedure enables employees to raise grievances in connection with their condition of employment and other employment-related matters. 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.

Who may complain

Any member of a family being visited or a representative on behalf of any member of a family being visited may make a complaint. Each family should 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.

Responsibility of staff and volunteers

Home-Start staff and volunteers need to be sensitive and helpful to families, 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 families who feel that they may have been subject to racial 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 applications under the Act. However, it is up to the person concerned to decide whether to use that process and it is advisable for them to take specialist advice before proceeding.

The Home-Start Scheme Manager is responsible for ensuring the smooth working of the Complaints Procedure.

Complaints procedure flow diagram



