

adoption matters

Adoption charity where children matter

Your Feedback Matters

How to share a compliment, comment, or complaint

www.adoptionmatters.org

Members of:

cvaa uk

new family social

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Comments, Compliments & Complaints

Information for Service Users

Adoption Matters is committed to providing a quality service, which is efficient, effective, timely and conducted in an open, friendly and respectful manner. We welcome all comments and feedback about the way we work and your views help us to make sure that we are giving the best service we can, and are important in letting us know if there are any things we could do better.

Your feedback may include compliments (e.g. praise of a particular service or staff member), comments about how our services could be developed, or complaints.

Compliments and comments can be shared by talking to the person working with you or a manager. This leaflet, which is also available on our website, contains a tear off sheet for your convenience, or you can share your views with us by telephone, in a letter/email, or by asking to meet with us. Contact details can be found at the end of this leaflet.

Let us know how we are doing

Comments

We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have about how we could improve any aspect of our service. If you make a comment about our services, we will reply to you in writing.

Compliments

We are always pleased to hear from people using our services who want to praise a particular member of staff or the service they receive. If you send us a compliment we will write back to you and send a copy to the staff concerned and their manager(s) so that they know their work is appreciated.

Complaints

We realise that despite our best efforts, sometimes things can go wrong and in such instances we want to hear from you so that we can address this. We regard complaints as an opportunity to turn a negative experience into a positive one, as well as an opportunity for us to learn and to improve how we do things.

If you wish to make a complaint, we will do all we can to investigate this fairly, confidentially, and quickly and to explain the result to you. This leaflet summarises the agency's Complaints Procedure, a copy of which is available on request.

The purpose of our procedure is to ensure that we:

- Listen and are responsive to people who raise an issue with us.
- Respond swiftly, aiming to resolve complaints informally and where possible are fair, consistent and transparent in our approach.
- Offer solutions and/or explanations.
- Provide appropriate support for any staff who are mentioned in complaints.
- Record complaints consistently and monitor what we record.
- Use complaints positively as an opportunity for learning and improvement.

Who can complain?

Anyone who is receiving a service, or who has been provided with, or has been refused a service from Adoption Matters may complain to us. Carers can make a complaint in their own right or on behalf of a child in their care. We also have a separate leaflet for children “A Children’s Guide to Complaints”

We can assist if your first language is not English or if you have other specialist needs.

How to make a complaint

The informal route

Stage 1

In the vast majority of situations we are able to deal with complaints informally and quickly and achieve a solution that is acceptable to both parties.

Your first step should be to discuss the issue directly with the person with whom you have been dealing, ideally as and when the situation arises. This staff member should discuss the matter with their line manager and explain what they have done to address the complaint to ensure that it is handled effectively.

Stage 2

If you are not happy with the response you receive from the member of staff you are working with, or you feel that they cannot help you, you should ask to speak to their line manager. You can contact them by telephone or email to explain your concerns or alternatively you have the option of meeting with them.

Sometimes people tell us “this is not a complaint but…” or raise an issue with us without stating that they wish to complain and we will treat this in the same way under our informal procedure.

When you contact the line manager, it is helpful if you are able to explain clearly:

- What the problem is.
- What you would like to see happen to resolve your complaint.

The line manager will look into all aspects of your complaint and the matters you have raised and you will receive a response within 28 working days.

The formal route

Stage 3

If you are unhappy with the response from Stage 2 and feel that your complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily, you can make a written complaint to the Chief Executive (CEO), outlining your reasons for remaining dissatisfied and what actions you expect to see. This instigates the formal complaints procedure.

In certain circumstances, for example if your complaint is about the line manager, or if the line manager feels it is inappropriate for them to deal with it, they may recommend that your complaint be escalated to Stage 3 instead of responding to you themselves.

Your correspondence to the CEO can be made either by email or letter but must be made in writing. If you need any assistance in preparing your written complaint, for example if English is not your first language, we can provide you with support.

At this stage, your complaint will be fully investigated by the agency's designated lead for complaints (DLC), a senior member of the management team who is experienced in customer service and complaints handling. They will speak to all the members of staff who have been involved or who are named in your complaint and review all previous correspondence. They will address each element of your complaint and set out all their findings, conclusions and recommendations in a report or letter, outlining any actions the agency plans to undertake. You will receive this within 28 days of your formal complaint being received by the Agency.

Stage 4

If still not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right to appeal to the agency's Board of Trustees. You would need to write again to the CEO explaining why you are still not happy with the Agency's response and what outcome you are looking to achieve. The CEO will appoint three Board members to an appeals panel to consider all the previous information and correspondence regarding your complaint and you will be invited to a meeting to discuss their conclusions and final decision. In certain circumstances, they may also invite an external advisor to review the complaint and report on their findings, in which event you would be informed of the reasons in advance.

The CEO will write to you within 14 days of receiving the panel's written report summarizing their recommendations and final decision. This will conclude the agency's complaints procedure.

A copy of our full complaints procedure is available on request.

All comments, compliments and complaints should be addressed to our Head Office

Adoption Matters, 14 Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1AE

Tel: 01244 390 938

Fax: 01244 390 067

E-mail: info@adoptionmatters.org

Website: www.adoptionmatters.org

If having exhausted the agency's procedure you are still dissatisfied with the outcome, you will be told of other avenues for complaint (eg Ofsted)

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

You may also wish to contact Ofsted with a comment, compliment or complaint.

They can be contacted at:

Ofsted, North Regional Office, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Helpline: 0300 123 1231

Website:www.ofsted.gov.uk

Complaints about a Local Authority: Children & Young People

From 1 April 2004, local authorities have a duty under section 26A of the Children Act 1989 to make arrangements for the provision of advocacy to children in need, looked after children and care leavers making or intending to make representations (including complaints) under the Children Act 1989.

Each Local Authority with responsibility for a Looked After child should provide the child with details of their complaints procedure and details of an independent advocacy service that the child can access. You need to ensure that the child's Social Worker gives you this for the child when the child is placed in your care. Children placed outside of the authority who use alternative and augmentative forms of communication and those whose preferred language is not English are particularly vulnerable. Local authorities must make sure that the arrangements they make for providing advocacy services are able to provide an effective service to these groups of children.

Carers should enable children to make complaints and representations and ensure that the child is not subject to reprisals for making a complaint or representation.

Comments / Compliments / Complaints Tear-off Form

You may ask a member of staff to help you complete this form. Please give as much detail as possible and continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Either hand your completed form or letter to the member of staff with whom you have been dealing or post it to:

The Chief Executive, Adoption Matters, 14 Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1AE.

Name: _____

Address:

_____

_____

Postcode: _____

Telephone Number: _____

This is a: Comment Complaint Compliment (please circle)

Please give details *(please use additional sheets if necessary)*:

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