

Representation & Complaints Procedure **The Children (NI) Order 1995**

Information for Adults

We are committed to working with and providing a service for young people, parents and carers. If you are unhappy with a social service provided to children, we would like to hear from you.

Representation means an enquiry about children's social services and how they are provided.

You may have a complaint about any of the following:

- Day care
- Services to support children within the family home
- A child's accommodation by a Trust
- Aftercare
- A decision relating to the placement of a child
- The handling of a child's case
- The process involved in decision making
- A service which has not been provided
- A decision by a Trust concerning exemptions from the usual fostering limit
- Matters which affect a group of children
- The way a Trust has managed or handled a child's case.

Who can complain?

The following people can complain:

- Any child who is being looked after by a Trust, or who is not being looked after by a Trust but is in need
- A parent of a child or young person
- A person who has parental responsibility for the child or young person
- Any Trust foster carer
- Any other person that the Trust considers to have sufficient interest in the child's or young person's welfare.

Who should you complain to? (Problem Solving Stage)

Often problems can be resolved at a local level. You can discuss any problem you have with:

- The child or young person's social worker, foster care worker, or residential worker,
or
- Any team leader or manager.

If you do not feel able to talk to any of these people or if you are not happy with how it is being handled, you can make a complaint to the Complaints Manager:

Complaints Manager
South Eastern H&SC Trust
Lough House
Ards Hospital
Church Street
Newtownards
BT23 4AS

Telephone: (028) 9056 1427
Fax: (028) 9056 4815
Email: complaints@setrust.hscni.net

The Complaints Manager will write to you within two days from receiving your letter and will ask a senior member of social services staff to contact you about your complaint and meet with you to talk about it.

What to Do Next – (Stage 1)

After you meet, if you are still not happy, you should write to the Complaints Manager to explain what you remain dissatisfied with. We will write to you within 2 days to tell you we have received your complaint. A Trust Officer (manager from the Trust), who has not been involved in your case, and an Independent Person, who is not employed by us, will look into your complaint.

If necessary, they will arrange a meeting at a time and place which is suitable for you to talk about your complaint.

We will then contact you within 28 days of receiving your complaint to let you know the outcome.

If you are still unhappy – (Stage 2)

You need to write to the Trust within 28 days of receiving your response from the Trust to tell us the issues you remain unhappy with.

The Complaints Manager will arrange for a Panel, which will include two senior managers not previously involved, and an Independent Person, to consider your complaint within 28 days. We will contact you about their findings within 28 days.

What if you are still not satisfied?

You can ask the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) to investigate your case within 6 months.

However, although you can contact the Ombudsman at any time, he will not usually take on a case, which has not been through the Complaints Procedure in the Trust.

Contact details for the Ombudsman:

The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Freepost NIPSO
Belfast

Freephone: 0800 34 34 24
Text phone: (028) 9089 7789
Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk
Website: www.nipso.org.uk

Useful contacts

The Patient Client Council – Throughout the complaint investigations you also have a right to seek the help of the Patient Client Council.

The Council is an independent body, set up to represent your interests in Health & Social Care. They are willing to assist you at any stage of your complaint by providing advice and support.

The Patient Client Council can be contacted at:-

Freephone: 0800 917 0222
Website: www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net
Email: info.pcc@pcc-ni.net

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) – RQIA is the independent Health and Social Care regulatory body for Northern Ireland.

Further information about services provided by RQIA is available at:-

Telephone: (028) 9051 7500
Website: www.rqia.org.uk

This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats. Should you require a copy in another format please contact the Trust Complaints Office at the address given above.