**COMPLAINTS AND CONSULTATION POLICY & PROCEDURES**

1. **Purpose** 
   1. Omega Care Group is committed to providing consistently high standards of service. All complaints must be handled thoroughly without delay and with the aim of satisfying the complainant, learning from the issues raised whilst being fair and open with those involved.
   2. There is a need to view complaints positively as a valuable contribution to improving services.
   3. Omega Care Group is committed to identifying lessons learnt so services can be improved.
2. **Scope** 
   1. The policy applies to all complaints either verbally or in writing received and relating to Omega Care Group.
   2. This policy applies to all services operated by Omega Care Group
3. **Policy Statement**
   1. Statement Principles of Good Practice:
   * Child Focussed
   * Acting with ‘Duty of Candour’
   * Acting fairly and proportionately
   * Resolving and harmonising
   * Continuous reflection and evolvement
   1. To ensure that all complaints are fully investigated to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint.
   2. To ensure that all staff have a clear complaints procedure to follow and receive appropriate training to successfully manage complaints.
   3. To ensure that complaints and feedback are used as a learning process to improve the quality of services.
4. **Legal Requirements:**

* The Children Homes Act 2015
* Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
* Care Standards Act 2000, National Minimum Standard 16
* Health & Social Care Act 2008

1. **Related Policies** 
   * + Child Protection and Safeguarding
     + Managing Allegation against staff
     + Whistleblowing

1. **Definitions** 
   1. A complaint can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with the care, services or facilities provided by Omega Care Group.
   2. Examples of a complaint can include but not limited to:

* The attitudes or behaviour of staff;
* Decisions made by staff
* Delays in dealing with problems or in providing a service.
* Being refused a service, including an assessment.
* The quality of a care
  1. A complaint concerning mistreat or harm must not be managed under the complaint procedure however under the child protection procedure within the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.
  2. Throughout this policy the term “child” will refer to children and young people.

1. **Training** 
   1. Staff will receive training on how to respond to complaints and will hold knowledge and understanding of the complaint process.
2. **Being Heard**
   1. All children should be enabled and encouraged to convey their suggestions and ideas to evolve the care they receive and the accommodation they live in.
   2. Each home operates numerous tools to support a child’s voice this includes the Residential Care Plan, Sign of Safety Risk Management Plans and Young People meetings. These tools must be used amongst other techniques to support the child leading their care where appropriate.
   3. All staff will aid the children in having input in the day to day running and routine of the home, and in activities that are being planned. At times, children may disagree, and it is the staff member’s duty to provide a reasonable and valid explanation thus a suitable alterative.
   4. Examples of disagreements in Children Residential Services can include:
      * + - Meal preparation
          - Bedtimes
          - Allowances
          - Sanctions
   5. Examples of disagreements in 16 plus services can include:
      * + - Daily Health and Safety Checks
          - Break down of subs
          - Agreed expected time of return
   6. If a child remains unsatisfied they should be given the opportunity to make an Informal or Formal Complaint.
   7. All children should be issued with a complaint form when admitted into the home and given a stamped envelope.
   8. Children within the children residential admission service may also email a complaint to [complaintscr@omegacaregroup.org](mailto:complaintscr@omegacaregroup.org) if appropriate.
3. **Who makes a complaint:**
   1. Following individuals have a right to make a complaint

* A child
* A parent or a carer of a child
* Someone acting on behalf of the child
* Neighbour living locally

1. **Informing the child of their right to make a complaint:**
   1. Children will be informed on their right to make a complaint during their admission. Details of the complaint procedure are documented in a child friendly manner.
   2. All Children are given a complaint form upon their admission alongside a stamped envelope with the office address on.
   3. All young people guide’s hold details of external organisations the child can contact if they are not happy with their care.
   4. Children will also be informed in each young people’s meetings and can access forms located around the house.
   5. Each form also details a confidential email address which is only monitored by the strategic management team.
   6. All home Managers must take every reasonable step to ensure that children feel comfortable with the making of comments or complaints.
   7. Children should not be pressured or influenced to make a complaint by staff.
   8. Children should be given any necessary support to compose their request or complaint and should be reminded they can request someone to make their complaint on their behalf. Details of the staff member supporting the child should be recorded.
   9. Advocate details should also be available to support the child.
   10. The complainant must be advised that if they choose to complain directly to their Placing Authority, it is therefore the placing authority to provide information and guidance.
   11. Where relevant, the child's parents and the Placing Authority must be given a copy of the complaint’s procedure.
   12. The complaint procedure should be made available to all stakeholders of concern.
2. **Receiving Complaints** 
   1. In the event of an individual specifying they wish to make a complaint, the recipient of the complaint should ensure they exhaust all other options to resolve the complaint.
   2. If the individual is specifying they wish to proceed in making a complaint the home manager where appropriate should handle the concern if appropriate. If the complaint is concerning the home’s manager, the complaint is then passed to the Service Manager.
   3. The decision to who should deal with the complaint is case by case. All complaints should be highlighted to the strategic management team. It will be determined by the strategic management team who will manage the complaint.
   4. Complaints should preferably be put into writing, in a letter or using a Complaints Form; but other methods may be used, including the use of audio tapes or verbally.
   5. Within Children Residential Services complaints can be sent by email to [complaintscr@omegacaregroup.org](mailto:complaintscr@omegacaregroup.org)
   6. If assistance is provided to complainants in recording or writing their complaints, the record/letter should indicate the name, status and contact details of the person providing the assistance.
   7. Brief details of the receipt of all complaints must be recorded in the Complaints Log at the home in the house data file.
   8. Upon receipt of the complaint, the complainant should receive confirmation of receipt with details of the complaint procedure.
3. **Processes of complaints**
   1. Stage 1 Local Resolution – Maximum of 10 days
      1. This stage provides the opportunity for an informal complaint to be resolved locally by the home’s Manager if appropriate. Complaints are sent to [ComplaintsCR@Omegagroup.org](mailto:ComplaintsCR@Omegagroup.org) within Children Residential Services or posted to Omega Head Office where Strategic Management will determine if the home should process the complaint. All efforts will be made to resolve complaints immediately within the home being as impartial and unbiased as possible.
      2. Any outcomes of the complaints should be recorded though ‘you said, we listened’ tool. The child should be given a copy of this and a further copy should be stored in their file. The child must also receive outcomes of complaint verbally.
      3. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome sourced, then the complaint will move to stage two.
   2. Stage 2 Formal Consideration – Maximum of 10 days
      1. Stage two complaint considerations include:

* Stage 1 Complaints that are not resolved satisfactorily.
* Where the manager of the home does not have the appropriate level of authority to resolve the Complaint;
* Where the Complainant has requested a Stage 2 Investigation
  + 1. All complaints should be verified and clarified in writing with the complainants prior to formal consideration.
    2. If the complaint relates to a child in the home the social worker and other relevant professionals should be informed.
    3. Complaints should be attempted to be resolved as soon as they possibly can, if additional time is required the placing authority should be made away.
    4. The complainant should be informed of the outcome verbally and in writing using the ‘you said, we listened’ tool.
    5. In cases where the complaint is upheld or partially upheld, detail of remedial action should be noted and an apology issued.
    6. Brief details of the complaint should be noted in the home’s complaint log in the house data file.
    7. Outcomes of the complaint should be issued to the placing authority.
    8. Serious complaints should be shared with the regulatory authority and any outcomes and remedial action should also be shared.
    9. A copy of the complaint and outcomes should be stored within the child’s file.
  1. Stage 3 Review Panel – Maximum of 10 days
     1. When the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 2, then the matter will be forwarded to the company director Alex Aresti to review the recommendations that are made.
     2. The same principles as stipulated in Stage 2 must be applied for stage three.
  2. External Complaints
     1. If the individual concerned is not satisfised with the complaint being managed internally, they can contact the relevant organisations:
     + **The Children’s Commissioner** can also offer free support, advice and information to anyone in care, leaving care, living away from home or working with children’s services.

**Children’s Commissioner for England** - Annie Longfield

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0800 528 0731

Email: [help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

Web: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/>

* Children admitted into Children Residential Services may contact:

The Regulatory Authority, **Ofsted**, can be contacted by post at:

Ofsted, Piccadilly, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD, Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk), Web: <https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints>

1. **Responsibilities** 
   1. The home manager must ensure each month there is no outstanding complaints
   2. The home manager will ensure the child of the complaint outcome form is signed of upon the complainant being satisfied with the outcome
   3. It is the home manager’s responsibilities to ensure all records of the complaint, logs and outcomes are stored securely
   4. It is the home manager responsibility to ensure any remedial actions are embedded
2. **Consultation** 
   1. Omega Care Group embraces reflective practice to support the evolvement of good practice. Consultation tools will be utilised to seek feedback on a regularly basis across all individuals using the services provided by Omega Care Group.