

COMPLAINTS POLICY

We are committed to the provision of high-quality services. Feedback on these, positive or negative is always welcome. We have a code of conduct for staff and volunteers which requires them to act professionally and courteously at all times. However, we recognise there will be occasions where someone is unhappy about the service they have received or about an aspect of Early Education's work, and it is our aim to resolve any such complaints swiftly and effectively. This policy sets out the procedure for making informal and formal complaints. This policy applies to complaints about Early Education's services, activities and operations. It does not cover staff grievances, whistleblowing concerns, safeguarding concerns or matters that are subject to legal proceedings, which are dealt with under separate procedures.

1. Informal complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received from Early Education we would encourage you in the first instance to deal with the situation informally by contacting one of our staff to discuss your concern by email, over the phone or face-to-face. This may often be the best way to resolve the issue. This will also help us to re-evaluate the aspect of work that you are not happy about and make changes as necessary to improve the service.

2. Formal complaints

Who can make a complaint?

Organisational and individual members, service users, stakeholders and funders may make a formal complaint. This must be sent to us in writing, either by email (to office@early-education.org.uk) or post (to Early Education, 2 Victoria Square, St Albans AL1 3TF) We will make reasonable adjustments to support anyone who may have difficulty making a complaint in writing because of disability, language or communication needs.

What is the timescale for making a complaint?

You may notify us of a complaint at any time, but for us to resolve your complaint effectively it is best to complain as soon as possible.

Responding to your complaint

- We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.
- The relevant manager will investigate your complaint and respond to you usually within 15 working days. If this time needs to be extended, we will write to you to inform you of this.

- You will be informed of the findings and any steps that we may take to improve our services or to prevent such an incident from happening again.
- In the case of a complaint against the Chief Executive, your complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees who will nominate another Trustee to investigate it.

Appealing against the outcome of our investigation

- If you remain dissatisfied, you may appeal within 10 working days. You must address your appeal to the Chief Executive or the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The appeal will be conducted by someone not involved in responding to the initial complaint.
- The investigation will include a meeting with you which will be held within 10 working days of receipt of your appeal.
- You will be informed of the decision within a further 10 working days.
- The decision of the Chief Executive or member of the Board of Trustees will be final and any appropriate action will be taken at the earliest opportunity.

Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Detailed information will only be shared with those involved in investigating and resolving the complaint. Summary information will be shared with the trustees (see below).

Reporting/Monitoring of Complaints

Formal complaints will be reported and monitored regularly by the Board of Trustees.