

Complaints Procedure

1. Overview

1. a What is a complaint?

- A written or oral expression of dissatisfaction about the society's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action taken or the service was provided by either a staff member or volunteer acting on behalf of the society.

1.b This policy does not cover complaints regarding:

- A request for an ISPCC service to be delivered.
- The fact that ISPCC provides child protection and welfare services and
- The fact that ISPCC advocates for and on behalf of children in Ireland is not of itself a matter for complaint.

2. Scope

2.a Who may make a complaint?

- A child in receipt of services provided by the ISPCC
- A parent/caregiver of, or any other person with parental responsibility for, a child referred to above, who him/herself is
 - Providing day to day care for that child
 - Receiving a service from the ISPCC
- Any other person whom the ISPCC considers has sufficient interest in the child's welfare to justify consideration of his / her complaint.
- Any other adult in receipt of services provided by the ISPCC.
- Any other adult in contact with ISPCC staff and or volunteers carrying out their ISPCC duties
- A complainant may nominate an advocate or representative to assist him / her in making the complaint. The Manager, assisted where necessary by the Director, must assess the 'bona fides' of the nominee.

3. Process

3.a How to make a complaint?

- A complaint can be made directly to a member of staff or directly to the Manager at the nearest ISPCC office.
- A complaint should be made in writing which can be done with the assistance of a staff member, but must be signed by the complainant. This written complaint should explain clearly:
 - What the problem/ complaint refer to?
 - What is the history of the situation if any?
 - What actions have been taken so far in the resolution of the complaint?
 - What the complainant would like to happen/ what actions the complainant would wish the ISPCC to take?
 - If the complaint refers to a child, what is the complainant's relationship/status to this child? e.g. Parent of the child involved
 - All the relevant contact details of the complainant so that we can make contact following receipt of the complaint
- Remember to include the name of the child that is involved. Keep a record of your complaint e.g., a copy of your letter or complaint form. You can expect a response from the ISPCC within 14 days of receipt by the ISPCC.

3. b How will the complaint be dealt with?

- The Manager and appropriate Director will be made aware of any complaints.
- The initial complaint will be dealt with by the Manager or a designated staff member.
- In the event the complaint is against a staff member or volunteer, the staff member or volunteer will be notified and afforded the opportunity to respond.
- The principles of natural justice will apply.
- Both parties will have access to all correspondence
- The complaint may be redacted if it contains 3rd party reports or hearsay
- Where appropriate a full investigation will be carried out.
- The complainant and relevant staff member will receive a response ideally within *14 days.
- Should it be deemed more appropriate the matter will be dealt with through the ISPCC Child Protection Policy and/or Disciplinary Procedures. If this is the case both the staff member and the complainant will be notified of this fact.
- Once a decision is made, the complainant and parties involved will be notified of the outcome either verbally or in writing.

3.c What if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome/response?

- In the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome/response then he/she will be afforded the opportunity to appeal the response to the Director (or persons as nominated by him/her)
- He/She must appeal directly to the Director (or persons as nominated by him/her) within 7 days of receiving a response from the Manager.
- The Director (or persons as nominated by him/her) will review all the details of the case and issue his/her findings within *14 days,

3.d What if the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome/response?

- In the event that the complainant is still unsatisfied, he or she will have the right to appeal to the CEO (or persons as nominated by him/her)
- He /she must appeal directly to the CEO (or persons as nominated by him/her) within 7 days of receiving a response from the Director (or persons as nominated by him/her) outlining clearly the reasons for appeal
- The CEO (or persons as nominated by him/her) will decide whether a) an appeal is accepted b) whether further investigation is necessary and c) issue his/her findings/decision within 14 days.
- Once a decision is made, the complainant and parties involved will be notified of the outcome either verbally or in writing. In some cases it may be deemed more appropriate to provide a verbal update only.
- The decision of the CEO (or persons as nominated by him/her) will be final.

Note: * Should the matter need further investigation and a response is not possible within 14 days, all parties will be notified of this fact. This may be the case for example, if the situation is very complicated or a key person is away.

4. Our Policy

- All complaints will be dealt with as quickly, effectively and in a fair and honest way.
- All complaints will be treated with the utmost confidentiality in mind.
- The principles of natural justice will apply.
- In the event that the complaint is against a Manager the complaint will be dealt with by the Director (or persons as nominated by him/her) In the event the complaint is against the Director then the complaint will be dealt with by the CEO (or persons as nominated by him/her)
- At any stage during this process, the ISPCC reserves the right to appoint an independent person to investigate the complaint.
- All persons have the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a support person.
- The society reserves the right to review and update this policy.

5. Aggressive or Obsessive Complaints

The ISPCC wants to deal fairly and honestly with complaints and ensure that other service users, staff or volunteers as a whole do not suffer detriment from persons making vexatious complaints. The ISPCC will take vexatious complainants very seriously and notify such complainants that their behaviour is considered to be unacceptable.

6. Equalities Statement

The ISPCC aims to handle all complaints fairly and honestly regardless of who makes a complaint. *We are committed to treating all employees, customers and business contacts equally regardless of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the traveller community.*

7. Matters that are outside the Policy

The following matters are not included in this policy:

- Matters dealt with by National law or Guidelines

Attachment: Child Complaints Procedure

This document has been developed in line with this procedure but in a Child friendly manner and may be utilised by Children who wish to make a complaint.

ISPCC

Complaints Procedure for Children

“I’m unhappy about something”

If you are a child getting help and support from the ISPCC and you are unhappy about a volunteer or a person working with the ISPCC, then you have the right to complain about it. To do that you need to contact us so that we can try to put things right as soon as possible.

So what do I do next?

Stage 1

“Tell Us”!

The first step in sorting out a problem is letting us know. You can complain yourself or you may want someone you trust to help you make the complaint. This may be an advocate (someone who will help you express your wishes and feelings or point of view). Most of your problems can be sorted out easily and quickly once they have been shared.

To make a complaint you can contact an ISPCC Manager (contact details at bottom of page) whose job is to listen to you, support you through the complaint as well as manage the complaint.

Don’t be afraid to complain. We will take your complaint seriously. You may contact us in any way you choose – remember you don’t have to write it down. You have a right to complain in the best way for you, by talking to some-one by phone or face to face, on-line, text or by email.

At each stage of the complaint process, we will make sure that you are given feedback on what is happening with your complaint. The Manager may need to speak to you and others who may be involved. The Manager will listen and try to solve the problem. You will also receive a reply telling you how things have been sorted and what you can do if you are still unhappy about things.

“How long will it take”?

We will try to resolve your problem within two weeks (14 working days). Some complaints will take longer. In this case we will let you know if we need more the time to deal with the complaint.

Stage 2

“What if I am unhappy with the reply”?

If you are not happy about the way your complaint has been dealt with or the reply you received from the ISPCC Manager, you need to tell the ISPCC Director, who will either look into this or ask somebody else to do so. He or she will speak to you about your complaint, and talk to anyone else that is involved in the complaint, if needed. When the ISPCC Director has received all the information, he or she will be in touch with you to let you know the reply.

“How long will this take”?

We will respond to you within 14 days. If this is impossible (for example when a person is on holidays) we will be in touch with you to explain the delay.

Stage 3

“What can I do if I’m still not happy – who else can I talk to”?

If you are not happy, you can make your complaint to the CEO of the ISPCC. The CEO will review your complaint and reply to you as quickly as possible.

Note: All complaints will be listened to and dealt with fairly and as quickly as is possible. Our Full Complaints Procedure is Available on: www.ispcc.ie. This document is created in line with our full policy on a Child Friendly basis.

Contact Person:

By Post: “PERSONAL”

Director of Services

ISPCC

29/30 Lower Baggot Street

Dublin 2

By Email: COsullivan@ispcc.ie

By Phone: 353 1 6767960