

### ISPCC Policy and Procedures:

<b>Title:</b>	<b>ISPCC Complaints Procedure</b>		
<b>Applies to:</b>	Employees ✓	Volunteers ✓	Board Members ✓
<b>Developed by:</b>	Director of Services, Caroline O'Sullivan	<b>Approved by:</b>	Senior Leadership Team
<b>Approved by Board:</b>	February 2017	<b>Applies from:</b>	February 2017
<b>Implementation plan:</b>	Place on ISPCC Website Share with our Funders	<b>Responsibility for Implementation:</b>	All ISPCC Staff
<b>Responsibility for Review:</b>	Director of Services, Caroline O'Sullivan	<b>Date of Review Completion:</b>	April 2025
<b>Review carried out by:</b>	Director of Services, Caroline O'Sullivan	<b>Next Review date:</b>	April 2027
<b>Nomination &amp; Remuneration Sub-Committee and Sign Off Date (where applicable):</b>		<b>Board of Directors Sign Off Date:</b>	

## Change Control Summary

Version	Date	Change	Reason	Editor

<b>Policy Statement</b>	<p>It is important that an individual or group or group has the facility to provide feedback, both positive and negative regarding ISPCC and/or its services. This policy is available to an individual or group whether they are directly receiving services provided by the ISPCC or not.</p> <p>It is important that the ISPCC retain records of the number and type of complaints / compliments we receive in order to continuously improve our services and also fulfil requirements of our funders.</p>
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<b>Rationale for this Policy</b>	This policy has been established to outline clearly who is covered within this policy, the types of feedback/complaints that are covered and how to go about providing feedback/making such a complaint.
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<b>Scope of the Policy</b>	This policy applies to all employees in the organisation, including temporary employees.
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## Overview of Feedback:

### What is Feedback –

- Feedback is helpful information or criticism that may be given to the ISPCC about a person's experiences or views of the ISPCC and/or its services.
- Feedback is valuable to the way we work and provides information to assist us in continuing/enhancing/improving the ISPCC and/or its services in the future.

Feedback which is of a negative nature may be dealt with through our Complaints Process.

Feedback will be shared with the appropriate service manager(s) and director.

## Overview of Complaints:

### What is a Complaints –

- A written or oral expression of dissatisfaction about the organisation'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 organisation.

### Matters that are Outside of this Policy:

- Matters dealt with by national law or guidelines
- A request for an ISPCC service to be delivered.
- The fact that the ISPCC provides child protection and welfare services
- The fact that the ISPCC advocates for and on behalf of children in Ireland is not of itself a matter for complaint.

### 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.
- Any child, adult or group who wishes to share their feedback, views with us regarding the ISPCC and/or ISPCC services.

- 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.

## Process of Making a Complaint:

### How to make a Complaint -

- The stages of complaint process are outlined below.
- Ideally matters will be resolved verbally at the first point of contact, however, where deemed necessary the matter will be resolved at a formal stage and the complainant must submit his/her complaint in writing. This written complaint should explain clearly:
  - What the problem/ complaint refers 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 10 working days of receipt by the ISPCC.

## How will the Complaint be dealt with?

### Our Policy –

- The manager and appropriate director will be made aware of any complaints.
- A Complaints Officer will be assigned to the complaint.
- 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.
- All persons have the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a support person.
- Both parties will have access to relevant documentation. However, the complaint/documents may be redacted if it contains third party reports or hearsay.
- 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.
- If 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 a director then the complaint will be dealt with by the CEO (or persons as nominated by him/her) and they will issue a complaint investigation report within 30 working days.
- At any stage during this process, the ISPCC reserves the right to appoint an independent person to investigate the complaint.
- The organisation reserves the right to review and update this policy.

### **Aggressive or Obsessive Complaints:**

The ISPCC wants to deal fairly and honestly with complaints and ensure that other service users, staff or volunteers 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 unacceptable.

### **Equality 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.

### **Child Complaints Procedure (Separate Policy):**

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.

### **Stages of Complaints Processes:**

#### **Stage 1 – Management of a Verbal Complaint at the point of contact:**

- Staff have clear delegations to resolve verbal complaints at first point of contact wherever possible.
- Where a complaint is resolved at the point of contact, the complaint must be examined to identify any quality improvements that should be implemented as a result.
- Where complaints cannot or should not be resolved at the first point of contact due to their seriousness or complexity, these complaints must be referred to the Complaints Officer for investigation at Stage 2.
- Complainants may not accept the outcome of the management of the complaint at the point of contact and may seek a review of their complaint at Stage 2 of the process.

#### **Stage 2A – Informal Resolution or Stage 2B – Formal Investigation:**

- Complaints that could not be resolved at Stage 1 or should not be resolved at the first point of contact due to their seriousness or complexity are then passed to a Complaints Officer for resolution by informal means or through a formal investigation.
- The Complaints Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days of receipt.
- The Complaints Officer will carry out a pre-investigation to check the validity of the complaint and the appropriate processes to be used to manage the complaint. Some complaints will not be suitable for investigation by the Complaints Officer and must either be referred to the appropriate manager or director for investigation or returned to the complainant with an explanation as to why the complaint cannot be investigated or with details of the correct process for the management of their complaint.
- The Complaints Officer may consider whether it would be practicable, having regard to the nature and the circumstance of the complaint, to seek the consent of the complainant and any other person to whom the complaint relates to finding an informal resolution of the complaint by the parties concerned.

- Mediation may be used to attempt resolution of the complaint at Stage 2 if both parties agree.
- Where informal resolution was not attempted or was not successful, the Complaints Officer will initiate a formal investigation of the complaint.
- The Complaints Officer is responsible for carrying out the formal investigation of the complaint at Stage 2 but may draw on appropriate expertise, skills etc. as required. Staff members have an obligation to participate and support the investigation of any complaint where requested.
- The complainant and relevant staff member will receive a response ideally within 30 working days.  
*Note: \* Should the matter need further investigation and a response is not possible within 30 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.*
- If the investigation cannot be concluded within 30 working days, the Complaints Officer will write to the complainant, explaining the reason for the delay. The Complaints Officer will provide the complainant with an update, in writing, every 20 working days thereafter.
- Should it be deemed more appropriate the matter will be dealt with through the ISPCC Child Safeguarding 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.

### Stage 3 – Internal Review:

- Where the investigation at Stage 2 fails to resolve the complaint, the complainant may seek a review of their complaint by the appropriate Director (or persons as directed by him/her) or CEO (or persons directed by him/her).
- Where the investigation at Stage 2 fails to resolve the complaint, where this is supported financially by a statutory body, the complainant may seek a review of their complaint by the statutory body, e.g. Tusla, HSE, as appropriate.
- Review Officer(s) will review the processes used to carry out the investigation of the complaint and the findings and recommendations made post-investigation.
- The Review Officer(s) will uphold, vary or make a new finding and recommendation.
- The Review Officer may carry out a new investigation of the complaint or recommend that a local re-investigation of the complaint be carried out by a Complaints Officer independent of the initial investigation team.
- Alternatively the Review Officer may determine that further processing (e.g. reinvestigation) of the complaint is required.

The complainant will be informed of any decision of the Review Officer and may accept the recommendations made or can seek a review of the complaint by the [Ombudsman](#) / [Ombudsman for Children](#)

#### Stage 4 – Independent Review:

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints management process he/she may seek a review of the complaint by the Ombudsman /Ombudsman for Children.

Note: At any stage of the process the complainant may make a complaint directly to the Ombudsman/ Ombudsman for Children. Please ask for further guidance on this.

<http://www.oco.ie/complaints/make-a-complaint>

In addition, as the ISPCC is a registered charity you can raise a concern with the **Charities Regulator**. You can contact them by phone on 01 633 1550 or by email at:

[concerns@charitiesregulator.ie](mailto:concerns@charitiesregulator.ie)

If the matter cannot be resolved with the ISPCC through their complaints procedure, the complainant can seek a review of the outcome / recommendation. If the service is Tusla funded they can email: [tellus@tusla.ie](mailto:tellus@tusla.ie). The complainant must make their request for a review to Tusla within 30 working days of receiving the complaint investigation report from the ISPCC (in exceptional circumstances the complaint review officer may decide to extend this timeframe).

In relation to HSE funded services, If the matter cannot be resolved with the ISPCC through their complaints procedure the HSE can be emailed at: [yoursay@hse.ie](mailto:yoursay@hse.ie) or Lo-Call 1890 424 555: Your call will be answered by a staff member from the National Complaints Governance and Learning Team.

#### 5. Contact Persons:

Contact Person for ISPCC – please note your complaint will be passed to the relevant manager/director –

Post: “Personal”  
Director of Services  
ISPCC  
Unit 3, Block 3  
Harbour Square  
Crofton Road  
Dun Laoghaire  
Dublin

Or

Email: [Caroline.O’Sullivan@ispcc.ie](mailto:Caroline.O’Sullivan@ispcc.ie)

Feedback: If you have any feedback on this policy or ideas for its improvement, please contact the Director with responsibility for implementation: Caroline O’Sullivan on [Caroline.O’Sullivan@ispcc.ie](mailto:Caroline.O’Sullivan@ispcc.ie)

## ISPCC Complaints/Feedback form

<b>Section 1: Your details:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Email address:</b>	
<b>Daytime telephone number:</b>	
<b>Mobile phone number:</b>	
<b>How would you prefer to be contacted:</b>	
<b>Section 2: If you are filling this form in on behalf of someone else, please give the following details:</b>	
<b>Their name in full:</b>	
<b>Their address:</b>	
<b>Please state your relationship to this person:</b>	
<b>Please state why you are making a complaint on their behalf:</b>	
<b>Section 3: Your complaint/comment</b>	
<b>Please give clear, detailed information in relation to the comment or complaint, including whether you have discussed the issue with the person involved in the complaint.</b>	
<b>If you have any documents to support your complaint, please attach to this form</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>If you have dealt with a member of ISPCC staff or Volunteer please put their name here:</b>	





Please return this form to:

Post: "Personal"  
Director of Services  
ISPCC  
Unit 3, Block 3  
Harbour Square  
Crofton Road  
Dun Laoghaire  
Dublin

Or via email to: [Caroline.O'Sullivan@ispcc.ie](mailto:Caroline.O'Sullivan@ispcc.ie)