

South West Family Services, Suite 3 Gandy Street Chambers, 11 Gandy Street, Exeter,
Devon, EX43LS

email: office@southwestfamilyservices.com phone: 07961671514

Policy Head Name:	Complaints Policy & Procedural Guidelines	
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Implementation Date:	01/02/2026	
Implementation By:	Kris Hewings - Director	
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**SOUTH WEST
FAMILY SERVICES**
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Complaints Policy & Procedural Guidelines

We aim to provide families and referrers with the best possible service and we value openness, honesty, opinions, comments, and suggestions from clients, service users, professionals, and referrers. Sometimes we may get things wrong, and you may wish to make a complaint. We see complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve our services, as well as a chance to put things right for the person who has raised the concern. We recognise that emotions can be heightened and that our work can feel very difficult at times, so we are willing to explore any concerns in line with this policy.

We may amend this policy and its procedures at any time, at our discretion, to ensure it remains up to date, effective, and compliant.

If you are a stakeholder, commissioned service, partner, or organisation wishing to complain about us, this policy and procedure still applies.

Stage 1 – Talk to us

1. **Notice a problem:** If you are unhappy with our service, try to tell us as soon as you can.
2. **Speak to someone:**
 - **Option A:** Talk to the team member you have been working with.
 - **Option B:** Contact the office and ask to speak to your caseworker or a member of the senior leadership team.
3. **See if it can be resolved:** Many issues can be sorted out quickly through a conversation at this stage.
4. **Next Stage if needed:** If the issue cannot be resolved move on to Stage 2. In specific circumstances, we may agree to move straight to Stage 2.



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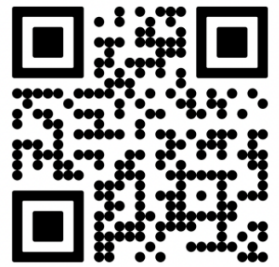
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Stage 2 – Making A Complaint

1. Write your complaint: Send an email to complaints@southwestfamilyservices.com with the subject line 'Complaint'.
2. Include these details in your email:
 - What you are unhappy about.
 - What happened from your perspective.
 - Why this has caused you concern.
 - What you would like to happen to put things right.

If your complaint doesn't include this information, we will ask you for more details. If you do not provide them, we may not investigate your complaint.

3. **We acknowledge your complaint:** You will receive an acknowledgement within 10 days.
4. **We investigate:** We will speak to anyone involved and will explain who we have spoken to in our response.
5. **You receive a response:**
 - We aim to reply within 30 days.
 - If this is not possible, we will send you an update and a new expected completion date.
6. **What our reply will tell you:**
 - What we did to investigate
 - Whether your complaint has been upheld or not.



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- Any conclusions or actions taken.

7. Checks and transparency:

- All complaints are reviewed by the investigator and a member of the senior leadership team before the response is sent.
- We will inform anyone involved in the complaint of the outcome.

- 8. If you're still unhappy:** Our response will explain how to move to Stage 3 if you do not feel the problem has been resolved.

Stage 3 – Ask for a review

- 1. Request a review:** If you are not satisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, you can request a review of the investigation. This must be done within 10 days of receiving the Stage 2 response.
- 2. Tell us in your review request:**
 - What you are still unhappy about.
 - What you would like to happen.
- 3. Who reviews it:**
 - The review will be carried out by the person who handled Stage 2 and the Director. If the Director did Stage 2, another team member may take this role.
- 4. We acknowledge your review:**



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- You will receive an acknowledgement within 10 days, including when you can expect a reply.
- We aim to reply within 30 days. If more time is needed, we will send you an update and a new expected completion date.

5. What the final reply will tell you:

- What we did to review the complaint.
- Whether anything should be changed.
- Any further signposting (e.g. where else you can go for help).
- Confirmation that the decisions at the end of Stage 3 are final.

National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC) Oversight

- We are an accredited member of the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC). If after this procedure has been carried out you are still not happy with the response then you can look at NACCC's role in complaints handling and oversight and full details can be found here: <https://naccc.org.uk/for-parents/making-a-complaint/>

It should be noted the role of NACCC in such cases will be to ensure we have followed this complaints procedure and to assist within appropriate and recognised boundaries for those involved to reach a conclusion.

NACCC's role is not to investigate the complaint again and as a membership organisation their role is to ensure we have followed this policy. NACCC are also not able to offer opinions on specific scenarios but will be able to refer you to the national standards and approved processes.



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During Investigation and when completed

- When investigating complaints we do not usually need to suspend services, but we may need to make temporary or permanent changes to the service provision, which we will inform you of at the time.
- Very rarely a continued relationship may no longer be viable because of a complaint and we will be transparent with all those involved if we must end our services with you, your family, your clients or customers. We will always do our best to ensure complaints are dealt with quickly and do not affect children who are the primary focus of our organisation. If we do need to end services, we will be transparent with you and the other parties involved as to why we have reached that conclusion.

Variations to the complaint's procedure

- We may vary the procedure for good reason if appropriate.
- Usually complaints will be investigated by a member of the senior leadership team or the Director. We may designate another person within our organisation or from a suitably approved external agency if appropriate and will communicate this to you. We may also do this if your complaint is about or involving the Director.

Monitoring and learning

- Written records of all complaints, including any written legal or insurance responses, will be held by us and a copy will be included in your families file if applicable.



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- Our service agreement outlines the terms between us and our clients, and this would not usually be affected by this policy.
- Details of complaints are a standard part of a family's file and are not protected information as defined by GDPR regulations. In practical terms this means if a court order or request is made to review our files the complaint and any correspondence around it would be included within those disclosures.