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**Complaints & Compliments Policy**

**Purpose**

YMCA Essex actively encourages feedback from a range of sources into the quality of the services delivered to our service users in every part of the service. YMCA believes that service users, children, parents, and carers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our service. Complaints are viewed as an opportunity to improve our standards and are seen as one of several drivers for continuous improvement. Compliments are welcomed as a means of recognising good practice and sharing in successes. The YMCA Essex Complaints and Compliments Policy is designed to promote feedback from service users, staff and external sources.

**Definition of Complaint**

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting service users, children, parents, and carers

Responsibility for Implementation

- Executive Team

- All Staff

**Principles**

In all services, staff will observe, abide by, and actively promote the YMCA Essex Complaints and Compliments system, inviting feedback from, parents, service users and their advocates and family members as well as commissioners and other professionals. All service users (and if appropriate their parents/families/carers) will be provided with a written copy of the Complaints and Compliments Policy in a format appropriate to their individual needs, which may include a range of user-friendly mediums, formats and languages where this has been identified as necessary.

*The system is designed to:*

1. Provide a means through which to register a formal complaint or obtain administrative review of decisions affecting service users.
2. Provide a means through which to acknowledge good practice.
3. By encouraging active feedback, inform quality building practices and provide a conduit for recommendations for continuous service improvement.

**Procedure – Complaints**

***How to complain***

**Stage 1**

Any service user, parent, advocate or stakeholder who is uneasy about an aspect of the service, staff member or provision talks over, first of all, their worries and anxieties with a member of staff, or if the concern is about a particular member of staff, with any on duty Manager or Head of Service. It is frequently possible to resolve a complaint informally, and wherever possible this should be the objective. The receiving staff member should aim for first contact resolution, and if this isn’t possible to take ownership of the problem and reassure the complainant that they will take all necessary steps to resolve the problem, giving a clear timescale for doing so.

**Stage 2**

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the complainant moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the Head of Service for that department. *Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally by Stage 2.*

**Stage 3**

The complainant requests a meeting with the Head of Service. An agreed written record of the discussion is made. All parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.

Where the complaint is resolved confirmation will be provided in writing to the complainant by the Head of Service within 5 days.

This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

**Stage 4**

If at the Stage 3 meeting the complainant and the Head of Service cannot reach agreement, the complainant should put their disagreement in writing for the CEO to review.

The CEO will review the complaint and respond within 5 working days.

**Stage 5**

Any complaints that are unresolved after concluding the above will be put in writing, stating why all previous actions are unsatisfactory to the Board. The Board will respond within 5 working days.

**Complaint Logging**

A register of all complaints received will be maintained at the YMCA Complaints File and stored digitally on SharePoint with the following information recorded:

a. Date the complaint was made

b. An allocated complaint log number

c. Person making complaint and their designation

d. Actions taken

e. The resolution

f. Date resolved

**Childcare complaints and Ofsted**

Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure.

In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of our registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements are adhered to.

The telephone number of our Ofsted regional centre is:

For general enquires – 0300 123 1231

For complaints – 0330 0123 4666

These details are displayed on our childcare notice boards.

If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Authorities Safeguarding Board.

In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed, and the Childcare Manager works with Ofsted and the Local Authority Safeguarding Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint followed by appropriate action.

**Compliments**

The company is always pleased to receive compliments and to hear about how the YMCA may have assisted someone to make a positive change in their life. Celebrating achievements both big and small with the people using our services is one of the most rewarding and important aspects of our work. Compliments may also be a means of learning what works for people in certain situations and so they can be used to help to find solutions to people’s difficulties. For staff, learning that they have done something well can contribute to a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Positive feedback is therefore welcomed and encouraged.

YMCA Essex office digital compliments folder, in which any letters sent expressing satisfaction are kept. These can then be shared with other service users, existing and new staff, people interested in receiving a YMCA Essex service and other professionals and people interested in finding out more about us on behalf of potential future service users.

Information about compliments will be collated by Managers passed on to the Chief Executive.