



Young Persons

Your Right to be Heard

Compliments, Complaints
and Comments Policy



What if I am not happy with something?

You've probably heard of people making complaints – in shops when they have brought something that doesn't work properly, or in hospital if they have been treated unfairly.

This policy is about making a complaint or giving us your comments about the support we give you, how we talk to you and treat you; and anything else that is important to you.

At Safe Steps we try really hard to make sure that anyone who has contact with the charity has a good and positive experience. However, if something goes wrong we hope we can get it sorted quickly. Sometimes, though, complaints are the best way to make sure things get dealt with properly. Even though complaints are usually about things going wrong, complaints can help make things better for you and for other people.

There are many different reasons why a child or young person might make a complaint, including:

- ✎ A worker has mistreated a child or young person.
Example: a worker has been rude to you, shouted at or hit you.
- ✎ A child or young person has shared information which has not been kept confidential.
Example: you've told your worker something and without your knowledge or consent this has now been shared with others.
- ✎ A child or young person has been waiting too long to get support.
Example: you've been waiting weeks to see a worker and feel things are getting worse.
- ✎ A child or young person thinks they have been discriminated against.
Example: a child or young person with additional needs is not able to go on a refuge outing because there are not enough staff.



It is always a good idea to get support when making a complaint. This help could include:

- ↘ Getting information about what rights you have
- ↘ Getting information about how to make a complaint
- ↘ Someone to talk to about your complaint
- ↘ Helping you write your complaint letter
- ↘ Keeping you updated about the progress of your complaint.

↘ Emotional support is having someone by your side who listens and cares about you. This can be very important if you have any meetings to discuss your complaint.

What Safe Steps will do

- ↘ We want to help you voice any complaints or comments you have. We can provide you with whatever support you need in order to make your views known.
- ↘ We will make it as easy as possible for you. You can talk to us, write a letter, use a complaints form, we will listen to your complaint however you wish to say it.
- ↘ We will never be upset or punish you for making a complaint. This is called victimisation and it's not allowed.



Consent

Children and young people have the same right to make a complaint as adults have. There is no set age for being able to make a complaint. You have the right to be heard and to be taken seriously, your views will be given 'due weight' in line with your age and maturity.

Adults can make a complaint if they want to about the work we do, but if an adult wants to make a complaint on your behalf, we will make sure they are the right person to raise that complaint for you before we respond. Your safety and the confidentiality agreement you have with us is very important to us.

When a complaint is made anonymously, which means you have made a complaint but not added your name to it, we obviously cannot respond to you directly. But we will investigate the complaint, using the information you have given us to improve our services in any way that we can.



How to get in contact

▾ Have We Done Well?

If you want to tell us something we've done well – bit like a High 5:

- ▾ Tell us – we love to hear this
- ▾ send an email to us at enquiries@safesteps.org
- ▾ give us your feedback when you finish your support, programme or leave refuge

▾ Have We Done Something Wrong?

If you want to complain or tell us something we did wrong:

- If you are unhappy with anything we say or do, please be brave and let us know
- ▾ Tell us or ask for a Complaint Form
 - ▾ Send an email to us at enquiries@safesteps.org
 - ▾ Give us your feedback when you finish your support, programme or leave refuge
 - ▾ Send us a letter (or hand it to your worker) addressed to:

Julia, Director of Services
Safe Steps
4 West Road
Westcliff-on-Sea
Essex SS0 9DA

We will aim to get back to you as soon as possible and within 10 days at the latest.



What happens after I have made a complaint

All cases will be different, and depending on what your complaint is we may do any of the following:

- ↘ say sorry
- ↘ do something different that we didn't do before
- ↘ do something better than we were doing before
- ↘ give you more information or better information
- ↘ look at what we're doing and see what changes we can make in the future
- ↘ give our staff some training so we can learn from your complaint
- ↘ anything else that is appropriate and agreed by both you and us

Your feedback really helps us

Feedback from children and young people is so valuable and we welcome it at Safe Steps. It really helps us learn and improve and shape how we practice.

We are a Charity and we have a Board of Trustees at the top who make sure we are all doing our jobs properly, safely and with good results. Your feedback is also read and taken seriously by our Trustees; the good, the bad and the 'in the middle'.



What if I am still not happy or I don't think you listened to me

If you remain unhappy with our response, even after the Trustees have investigated it, we will provide you with details of the Commissioner of the service (they pay us), for them to pursue the matter further.

If you feel we have broken the law or there is a serious risk of harm to the people we work with, you can contact:

- ∨ LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) at Southend City Council
- ∨ The Charity Commission Complain. www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity our Charity Number is 1177687.
- ∨ The Information Commissioner's Office if you are unhappy with how we use or look after your information <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

If you need help or to understand this speak to any of our staff or another trusted adult.

∨ Document information

Policy owner:	Safe Steps
Policy approved by:	Senior Management Team
Date policy approved:	June 2024
Next review date:	Every 2 years or if change occurs

