

Policy status: Current	Date approved by SLT: October 2025
Policy owner(s): Chief Operating Officer	Review frequency: Every 3 years Next review date: September 2028 (or sooner if legislation changes)
Related Policies (to be found on website): Safeguarding Policy; Whistleblowing Policy	Relevant Legislation:

1. Background	<p>Why do we have a complaints policy?</p> <p>We welcome feedback on any aspect of our work, including complaints, comments, compliments and suggestions. This policy covers complaints only.</p> <p>Comments, compliments and suggestions are welcome through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By email using the relevant email address on the "contact us" page of our website • Via telephone by leaving a voice message on 020 7843 6000. While we check voice messages regularly to connect enquiries appropriately, it is faster and more efficient to use email <p>More information and options for contacting us are available on our website https://www.ncb.org.uk/contact-us</p> <p>Whilst we always aim to get things right first time, we know that on occasion we may not. If we make a mistake, we will be open and honest about it as soon as possible. We will tell you about our mistake, explain why we think the mistake was made, and tell you how we will do our best to ensure it doesn't happen again.</p> <p>If you are thinking about making a complaint, but aren't sure if you want to, please contact us.</p> <p>Wherever possible disputes over service provision will be dealt with on an informal basis initially between the person providing the service and the complainant and then, if unresolved, by discussion between the complainant and the Head of the team providing the service. Only after this avenue has been attempted and failed will a more formal procedure be used.</p>
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	<p>The National Children's Bureau is positive about receiving complaints, and views them as an opportunity for us to get things right. We are committed to learning and continuous improvement. We use information about mistakes and complaint information constructively to reflect, learn, monitor and improve our performance.</p> <p>Who can complain using this policy?</p> <p>This policy is intended for all people who interact with the National Children's Bureau. This includes all children, young people, adults, workforce, partners, funders and supporters.</p> <p>This policy is available on our website for anyone to access at: https://www.ncb.org.uk/contact-us</p> <p>If you are an individual and not raising a complaint on behalf of an organisation, and don't want to make a complaint yourself, you can ask someone, such as a parent or friend, to make a complaint on your behalf. We will need to be sure you have asked them to raise your concern (we will need this in writing from you).</p>
<p>2. Objectives</p>	<p>Key principles of this policy</p> <p>We will treat anyone making a complaint with dignity and respect. We will take your concerns seriously.</p> <p>Our policy and procedures about complaints are clear, open and honest. We take extra care to make the complaints process as simple and straightforward as possible for the people we work with.</p> <p>Complaints will be resolved as swiftly, and as far as possible, informally, by those who are responsible for the relevant area of work. Whenever there is a delay for whatever reason, we will let you know quickly and tell you when you will hear from us next.</p> <p>Through the implementation of this policy and procedure, we will ensure there is a fair, clear and consistent process which sets out three stages for considering complaints. This includes, as far as possible, a consistent contact person who will update you throughout the process.</p> <p>We will respect confidentiality throughout the process. Only those involved in looking into the complaint will know about it.</p>

	<p>If you decide you want to withdraw your complaint, you can do so at any time.</p>
<p>3. Scope</p>	<p>What can you complain about?</p> <p>A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the work of The National Children's Bureau ('NCB'), including any member of the NCB Family.</p> <p>This policy sets out The National Children's Bureau's process for responding to complaints. The process is intended to be as clear, fair, consistent and timely as possible.</p> <p>What is not covered in this policy?</p> <p>This policy is not for National Children's Bureau staff. Staff with a complaint should follow the relevant policy below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing Policy • Grievance and Mediation Procedure • Safeguarding Policy <p>What constitutes a serious complaint?</p> <p>The Charity Commission for England and Wales defines a 'serious' issue/complaint as one concerning an action that could cause 'serious risk of harm to the charity or the people it was set up to help'. They provide the following list of such actions -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a charity not following the law, with damaging consequences to its reputation and public trust in charities generally. • serious harm to the people the charity helps or other people who come into contact with the charity through its work. • a person or organisation unlawfully receiving significant financial benefit from a charity. • criminal, illegal or terrorist activity. • a charity set up for illegal or improper purposes. • a charity losing significant amounts of money. • a charity losing significant assets, for example land or buildings <p>Complaints regarding "serious issues" should be raised directly with the charity in the first instance if possible</p>
<p>4. Policy</p>	<p>How to complain</p> <p>It is always preferable to use a known contact:</p>

- In person by talking to your main contact at National Children's Bureau
- By email to your main contact at National Children's Bureau

If you do not have a named contact at your main contact at National Children's Bureau you can complain:

- by email to the relevant email address on the "contact us" page of our website: <https://www.ncb.org.uk/contact-us>
- by telephone by leaving a voice message on 020 7843 6000. While we check voice messages regularly to connect enquiries appropriately, it is faster and more efficient to use email

Your complaint should contain the word "complaint" in the email subject line to ensure it is identified as such and treated in line with this policy.

Making sure our complaints policy is effective

We want our complaints policy to be effective. We will monitor and review complaint information to make sure that the correct procedure has been followed.

All complaints will be logged and monitored through a central register, held by us at The National Children's Bureau. The National Children's Bureau's Board of Trustees retain oversight of complaints as part of the charity's governance. They will make sure we are learning from complaints and making any necessary changes to the way we work.

This document may be reviewed at any time at the request of management but will automatically be reviewed every three years or sooner in response to new national guidance and/or legislation.

The National Children's Bureau has a three stage complaints procedure

Wherever possible disputes will be dealt with on an informal basis initially. Only after this avenue has been attempted and failed will a more formal procedure be used. If you are not satisfied with an informal resolution of your complaint or your complaint is deemed too serious to be dealt with informally, please follow this three-stage complaint procedure.

Stage 1 – Local Resolution

- The complaint should be made in writing to the relevant departmental director or deputy director within ten working days of the event/occasion which the complainant considers cause for complaint. The correspondence should clearly mark the subject as "Complaint". Complaints made after this time, but in a reasonable timeframe, will be considered on their merit through the same procedure outlined below.
- The NCB related activity or individual you have liaised with will be under obligation to provide the name and contact details of the departmental director or deputy director.
- Wherever possible the complaint will be dealt with informally between the complainant and the department director/deputy director within 10 working days of receipt of the written complaint.
- If the complaint being made concerns the departmental deputy director directly the complaint should be made in writing to the relevant departmental director. If the complaint being made concerns the departmental director directly or the chief executive, then the complainant should start stage 2 of the procedure.

Stage 2 - Appeal

- Should the informal resolution be unacceptable to the complainant or no resolution to the dispute is achieved, the complainant should complain in writing to the Chief Executive copied to the departmental director / deputy director within 20 working days of the event/occasion which the complainant considers cause for complaint. The correspondence should clearly mark the subject as "Complaint Appeal"
- Should the complaint be about the departmental director the complainant should complain in writing to the Chief Executive

within 20 working days of the event/occasion which the complainant considers cause for complaint.

- Should the complaint be about the chief executive the complainant should complain in writing to the Chair of Trustees within 20 working days of the event/occasion which the complainant considers cause for complaint
- The Chief Executive (or Chair of Trustees in event the complaint is about the chief executive) will consider the matter, communicating with the complainant and/or the NCB staff responsible for the service about which the complaint is being made.
- The Chief Executive (or Chair of Trustees in event the complaint is about the chief executive) will communicate their decision in writing to all interested parties within 20 working days of their receipt of the Stage 2 Complaint

Stage 3 – Follow Up

- The departmental director / deputy director will be responsible for ensuring the agreed follow-up actions are carried out.
- If the complaint was about the departmental director / deputy director, the chief executive will be responsible for ensuring the agreed follow-up actions are carried out.
- If the complaint was about the chief executive, the Chair of Trustees will be responsible for ensuring the agreed follow-up actions are carried out.
- The outcome of the complaint is final and marks the end of the NCB complaint process.

Options after appeal

If the complaint concerns a "serious issue" as defined by the Charity Commission and the complainant is not satisfied the NCB complaints procedure has adequately addressed their concerns a complaint can be raised directly with the Charity Commission via their website.

The Charity Commission regulates registered charities in England and Wales. They make sure that charities are accountable well-run and meet their legal obligations. The Commission will receive complaints related to suspected serious abuse or illegal activity at a charity. Further information is available on the gov.uk site, using this link: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

The Information Commissioners Office is the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, making people aware about their data protection and information rights. If you have a concern about The National Children's Bureau's information practices, you can report it directly via telephone on 0303 123 1113 or on their website: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Confidentiality, GDPR and data protection

This policy complies with the requirements of The Equality Act (2010) and is in accordance with The National Children's Bureau commitment to diversity and inclusion.

We will only tell those people involved in resolving your complaint about it. Sometimes we may need to share your complaint or concerns with other individuals to understand the situation fully. If you are a child, young person or an adult at risk making a complaint, we will talk with you about any concerns we have for your wellbeing that might make it necessary to tell any other adults.

After the complaint is resolved, we will keep a summary on record, using relevant data protection protocols.

We use anonymised information from complaints to make sure we learn and improve our services.

Under the UK GDPR (Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA" and EU Directive 2016/680 and Regulation EU/2016/679 – 'The General Data Protection Regulation' "EU GDPR") our [Privacy Statement](#) explains how we handle, store, retain and use your data.