



eastern
fostering
services

Making a Complaint

Childrens Guide

Feeling Safe and Happy in your fostering family

1. What does it mean?
2. What do I have to do?
3. When should I complain?
4. What will happen when I complain?
5. Serious complaints

At EFS, we promise to listen to your concerns and complaints. We want to make sure any problem you have is sorted as quickly as possible, so you can be happy and feel safe. This leaflet has been created to show you how you can make a complaint if you need to, who you can talk to and what will happen once you have complained. It is important to remember that you won't get told off if you complain and we will take your complaint seriously. If you need to make a complaint, read this leaflet, and talk to a member of the EFS team as soon as possible.

1. What does it mean?

A "complaint" is something you make when you are unhappy about something or someone. A "concern" is when you have a worry or doubt about something or someone. Both a complaint and a concern can be told to anyone, for example your foster carers, your EFS Social Worker, your Local Authority Social Worker or someone like your teacher. What you say will be taken seriously and we will listen to you.



2. What do I have to do?

You might be thinking "what sort of thing would I complain about?" - below is a list of examples. If you are unsure whether you need to complain about something, talk to someone you trust to check. You may need to complain about:

- Something that has happened in your fostering family that has upset you.

- The behaviour of someone else, such as an adult or child in the family, a Social Worker, Teacher or someone at school.
- Something that affects you a lot, such as bullying.
- Something that has happened outside home but affects you, such as the behaviour of other children or adults at clubs, on school transport or in the street.

If you ever need to complain about something like the examples above, you need to talk to somebody you trust. This could be anyone from the list below:

- Your foster carers
- A teacher
- Your EFS social worker
- Your LA social worker
- Your parents
- An adult who runs a club you go to

You can also talk to your friends about a problem, but it is important to tell an adult as well, as they will have more resources to be able to help and make a change for you.

If you do decide you would like to make a complaint, you should:

- Try and tell the adult as much detail as possible about your concerns
- Answer truthfully any questions the adult you told has asked
- Ask for any help you need

We will then be able to:

- Make sure you are involved in fixing the problem you are complaining about
- Talk to you about how things are going to sort your complaint out
- Make sure things are kept as private as possible
- Treat you with equality and fairness
- Tell you any information you need to know about what you have said or what will happen



3. When should I complain?

If you can, it is best to complain as soon as possible after something has happened because it is easier for you to remember important details, and the problem will be sorted out sooner for you. Try not to bottle things up, it will make you feel worse and sometimes, you will need extra help to fix the problem.

4. What will happen when I complain?

Stage 1

At this stage, you will meet with your EFS social worker, and you will be asked to complete a complaints form – you can fill it in by yourself, or they will help you. They will then talk to you about your complaint and take notes about what has happened.

If the complaint is about your EFS social worker, another member of the EFS team will sit down and talk with you.

You will be asked what you think might help to sort things out.

Your EFS social worker, or the team member you have spoken to, will then talk to Eleanor Newman, the person at EFS who looks at all the complaints, and they will let you know what can be done. This will take no longer than two weeks.

Stage 2

If the complaint is too complicated to be sorted out in two weeks, then stage 2 will begin. It may take another two weeks to try and resolve the complaint – you will be told if this needs to happen.



You will meet with your EFS social worker again, or if your complaint is about them, one of the senior social workers at EFS will meet with you. This meeting will be used to talk about the problem, and you will be told what has happened so far to help fix it.

During the meeting, notes will be taken of what has been talked about, and if after another two weeks the problem has not been sorted out, stage 3 will begin.



Stage 3

If the issue still hasn't been resolved after stage 1 and 2, the complaint will be given to Eleanor Newman, the EFS director. She will think about the complaint, talk about what has already been done and try to find a solution. If you have complained about Eleanor, she will make sure another person looks at this, who doesn't work for EFS.

Eleanor will try very hard to see what can be done and will try and fix things within two weeks, but if you are not happy with what she says, you can tell her.



5. Serious complaints

If you have ever been physically hurt (hit or injured on your body) or emotionally hurt (verbal abuse, made to feel upset or bad about yourself) by an adult, teenager or child, it is important that you tell an adult you trust. They will ask you what has happened and if they feel you may not be safe, they will have to tell other people. Your local authority social worker will be told, and the police might also need to know. Try not to worry about other people being told, it is really important that you tell someone, so that we can keep you safe.

Remember – Every child has the right to feel safe, loved and happy, to be treated with kindness and respect, and to grow up in a place where they are protected, listened to, and free to be themselves.

