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*Fostering hope in children*

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**Feeling safe and happy  
in your fostering family**





## Feeling safe and happy with 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.

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### ▶ 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. In this leaflet, complaint has been used to mean both a complaint and a concern.

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.

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### ▶ 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 your 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 go to the EFS website and press the button that says you want to talk to someone. We will make sure this is someone that you know and feel comfortable with.

You can always talk to your friends about a problem, but if you want something done about it, it is important to tell an adult as well.

**Of course, you should only make a complaint when you need to. When choosing whether to complain or not, ask yourself:**

- Could the problem be sorted out by talking to my fostering family or my Social Worker?
- Am I happy to ask another adult to sort the issue or do I want to use the steps in this leaflet?

**Once you have thought about the questions above, you can make your complaint. When the complaint has been made, you should:**

- Talk with the adults involved to help with understanding and finding a solution to the complaint.
- Tell someone about the problem in lots of detail.
- Answer truthfully to any questions the adult you told has asked.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Respect the people involved.

**As a result of your help, we will:**

- Make sure you are involved in fixing the problem you are complaining about.
- Talk to you about how things are going to sort your complaints 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?

**You should really try 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 need some extra help to fix a problem.**

### ▶ 4. What will happen when I complain?

#### Stage 1

In 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 with you about your complaint and will take notes of what has been talked about.

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 will then talk with Eleanor Newman, the person at EFS who looks at all complaints, and they will let you know what can be done. This will not take longer than 2 weeks.

#### Stage 2

If the complaint is too complicated to be sorted out in 2 weeks, then stage 2 will begin. It might take another 2 weeks to try and resolve the complaint - you will be told by your EFS Social Worker if this needs to happen.

You will meet with your EFS Social Worker again, or, if the complaint is about them, one of the Senior Social Workers in EFS. 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 again of what has been talked about, and if after another 2 weeks, the problem has not been sorted out, stage 3 will begin.

#### Stage 3

If the issue still hasn't been resolved after stage one and two, the complaint will be given to Eleanor Newman, the EFS Director.

She will think about the complaint, talk about what has already been done to try and fix the problem and try and find a solution. If you have complained about her, she will make sure another person looks at this, who doesn't work for EFS.

She will try very hard to see what can be done and she will try to fix things in 2 weeks, but if you are not happy with what she says, you can always tell her.



► 5. Serious Complaints

If you have ever been hit or hurt on your body or emotionally hurt by an adult, child or teenager it is important that you tell an adult you trust. They will ask you what has happened and if they think you might not be safe, they will have to tell other people. Your Local Authority Social Worker will have to 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 said something, and that you are safe and happy-that's all the adults will be worried about.

