



**MAKING A
COMPLAINT –
CHILDREN’S
GUIDANCE**

Everyone in the Affinity family is important to us and we believe that we should all be able to tell people if we are unhappy about something. Sometimes things can happen that make you feel unhappy, upset, or worried. It could be that you are unhappy about something that has happened at school or in your foster home, maybe you aren't happy about someone who works in the Affinity family. What's important is that you voice how you are feeling so we can work to make things better.

We'll always take your worries seriously because it's our responsibility to make sure that you feel safe in your foster placement. And, if you decide that you don't want to complain anymore, you can stop the complaint at any point.

Here's how you can make a complaint.

Talk to someone

The first step is to talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling and why you are upset. This could be your foster carer, your teacher, your social worker, or someone at Affinity Fostering like a support worker or supervising social worker.

If the problem is about Affinity Fostering or the care we are providing, your worries will be passed to your social worker, who will try to fix the problem. You'll also be given the contact details of an organisation called CORAM VOICE. They speak on behalf of children and young people when they make complaints. You can find out more about them here www.coramvoice.org.uk. They'll make sure that your wishes are heard and will support you in any important meetings about your complaint.



How Affinity will deal with your complaint

There are three stages that your complaint can travel through, and it can be resolved at any point within these stages.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Your complaint will need to be written down and passed to our Complaints Manager, Lesley Day. They'll let you know that they have received your letter within 7 days. They will then investigate your complaint. This can take up to 28 days.

When the Complaints Manager looks at your complaint, they'll ask to meet you (you can take someone you trust along with you). During the meeting and afterwards there will be a discussion about whether we can resolve your complaint without it going to the next stage. We'll also talk about whether we need to take your complaint to your local authority (they are the people who chose Affinity to look after you).

You'll hear about what we think and how we think your complaint should be fixed within 6 weeks. That's because we want to make sure that we've looked at everything properly.



Lesley Day-Smith



Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

There are two reasons why your complaint might reach stage 2. The first is if you aren't happy with the way we've tried to solve your complaint. The other reason will be if we think that your complaint needs to be dealt with by someone who doesn't work for Affinity Fostering.

You'll be asked to send your complaint in a letter to the Registered Manager. They'll write back within 5 days to tell you that they have asked someone who doesn't work for Affinity Fostering who will deal with your complaint. They're called an Independent Complaints Investigating Officer. They'll look at your complaint and will write a report to let everyone know what they think should be done.

Stage 3 – Independent Panel

If you aren't happy with the Independent Officer's decision, you can write to the Registered Manager to say so. The Registered Manager will then bring together an Independent Panel to look at your complaint.

They'll look at your complaint and will decide if they can do anything or whether they should pass it to Ofsted. Ofsted is an organisation that makes sure that Affinity Fostering are doing our job properly.



Introduction from Lesley Day- Smith, Affinity's Practice Manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Complaints Officer

I'd just like to take this opportunity to introduce myself – my name is Lesley Day-Smith, and my role at Affinity is Practice Manager, Designated safe Guarding Lead and 1st line Complaints Officer

Some of you may already know me, as I have been working for Affinity for many years now. I am also a Senior Supervising Social Worker and have worked with a number of our foster carers, children and young people.



One of my roles and responsibilities is to manage any initial complaints up to level one – anyone from a child/young person/parent/foster carer or anyone else who Affinity are providing a service to, can make a complaint under this procedure.

My other roles and responsibilities are to help with the recruitment, selection and induction of new team members. Assisting and supervising Affinity's supervising social workers– so I get to hear about all the achievements you make. I can also be involved in coordinating leave and training arrangements within the team to ensure that our standards of care can be maintained.

If you ever want to speak to me, please do – you'll find my contact details in your young person's handbooks. I look forward to seeing or speaking to you soon.

Yours Sincerely, Lesley Day- Smith

