

SENDIASS Oxfordshire **Complaints Policy**

Introduction

SENDIASS Oxfordshire is committed to providing an excellent service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. We encourage feedback and aim to make it easy for our users to raise concerns and make complaints. This policy provides a framework for handling concerns and complaints. We would always be keen to address any concerns before they reached a level where a formal complaint were necessary.

Definition

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of SENDIASS's work, including our volunteers (whether justified or not) that requires a formal response.

Aims of the policy

SENDIASS Oxfordshire wants to hear from users to say when they think something about our service is not right or does not meet their expectations and will respond to complaints and concerns however they are raised e.g. verbally, in writing or via the website feedback form.

We aim to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively. We believe one of the ways in which we can continue to improve the service that we provide is by listening and responding to the views of our users, partners and stakeholders and in particular responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Standards

All service users will be given clear information on request, about this policy and procedure, with guidance on how to raise a concern or make a complaint.

An initial response to any concern or complaint, fully explaining the procedure, will be made within five working days. This will be followed by a more formal response as soon as reasonably possible.

All SENDIASS staff will treat concerns and complaints with care and respect to the individual.

All complaints will be thoroughly investigated.

Service users will be encouraged, in the first instance to raise their concerns or complaints with the staff member responsible for providing the service. However, it is recognised that the user may prefer to discuss the matter with the staff member's line manager.

To make a complaint about SENDIASS, our service or our volunteers, you can call 01865 810516 and ask to speak to the service manager or e-mail: sendiass@oxfordshire.gov.uk and put FAO SENDIASS Manager in the subject line.

Where a complaint or concern is raised with SENDIASS Oxfordshire but proves to relate to another organisation or service, you will be offered information about how to take the matter up with the relevant body.

Some people may feel more comfortable dealing with a person who is not directly associated with the service they are using and if this is the case we recommend you follow Oxfordshire County Council's complaints procedure detailed below.

How can you make a complaint to Oxfordshire County Council?

You can make your complaints using whichever of the following methods is most convenient to you:

- In person at their offices with an arranged appointment
- By phone – 01865 323589.
- By email – complaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Online – www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/complaints
- By post – writing to: Comments and Complaints Service, Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, Oxford OX1 1ND

Anyone who receives or is seeking to receive a service from Oxfordshire County Council can make a complaint. This includes anyone acting for someone else, and with their permission, such as friends, family members or representatives.

How will they deal with your complaint?

The council recognises that every complaint is different and they want to investigate your concerns appropriately and will do so proportionately having regard to the Council's resources. The following stages will normally be followed:

Initial Review

On receiving your complaint they will acknowledge it in writing within five working days and say how they propose to resolve it. After investigating your complaint they will normally give you a response within 10 working days of their acknowledgement.

Further Review

If you are not satisfied with the outcome after the Initial Review, you should let them know why within 28 days. As with the Initial Review they will acknowledge your concerns within five working days. They will then make a further investigation and reply, normally within 20 working days of their acknowledgement. If they don't hear from you within 28 days, they will consider your complaint closed.

It is anticipated most complaints will be satisfactorily resolved through this two-stage process. However, should you remain dissatisfied with the council's final response to your complaint you have the right to refer your complaint and our response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint; telephone: 0300 061 0614.

Treating you fairly

The council welcomes complaints from all sections of the community. Assistance can be given to those who are not comfortable with written or spoken English and complaints can be made in a person's own language, if preferred. Contact them if you'd like help with this.

The council will remain open to exploring the possibility of mediation if it could usefully help resolve a complaint.