

Complaints and comments

Introduction

The complaints and comments procedure outlined below is designed to give the organisation a systematic approach to dealing with complaints that may arise from the way in which we provide the organisation's services.

As an organisation we regard comments and complaints as an invaluable tool in assessing our performance and of clarifying what we do and why we do it.

These complaints may be made about the way in which individual workers and management committee members carry out their duties; or the way in which the services and functions expected of us meet the needs of our target users. Any individual or organisation that comes into contact with our work is entitled to pass comment or make a complaint.

The Statement

One of the obstacles faced by many people who are either aggrieved or frustrated by the way organisations perform is the lack of knowledge they have about how or who they should complain to. The organisation recognises that it is important to take pro-active steps to ensure that this obstacle is removed for people who have contact with the organisation.

The organisation is committed to:

- carrying out its Equal Opportunities Policy
- seeking the views of users of our services
- providing relevant services which are good value for money
- offering a variety of services consistent with our aims and within available resources

Our staff will:

- be welcoming, polite and helpful
- answer enquiries about our services

Our premises will:

- be clean, safe, well maintained and welcoming
- open on time
- offer services as advertised

We welcome comments from individuals and organisations that come into contact with our work. If you feel we are not meeting our standards please tell any of our staff, or if you prefer, put your concerns in writing to either:

Chief Executive, Islington Play Association, West Library, Bridgeman Road, London N1 1BD

Or

OFSTED National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

You can also ring the OFSTED helpline: 0300 123 1231

Implementation

We are committed to ensuring that those complaining are informed of the action taken over the complaint.

The most likely way in which people will complain is verbally, face-to-face to an individual worker or IPA Board member. When this occurs it is important to encourage the person or organisation concerned to place their grievances in writing. Where appropriate staff or Board members could offer help in doing this.

If there is a reluctance to do this, the person or organisation concerned could be offered the option of meeting either with the Chief Executive or a Board member, or both, to make their complaint in person. At no point should individuals or organisations be discouraged from making complaints.

Process For Dealing with Complaints

- a) Where possible the Chief Executive and other staff will deal with complaints as they arise.
- b) All official complaints will be responded to in writing within 3 weeks.
- c) Relevant authorities / funders will be informed of any actions taken in response to complaints made about direct children's services.

Roles and Responsibilities

IPA Board

Ultimately the responsibility for dealing with complaints about the organisation rests with the IPA Board. It is essential therefore, that

- a) all official complaints are reported to the IPA Board
- b) all correspondence relating to official complaints is scrutinised by the IPA Board
- c) the outcome of all official complaints is reported to the IPA Board

The Chief Executive

As the person charged with the responsibility of ensuring the efficient day-to-day running of the organisation it is vital that the Chief Executive is informed of all official complaints received

- a) ensures that IPA Board decisions regarding specific complaints is carried out
- b) keeps all parties involved informed of progress and outcome received
- c) confidentiality, where appropriate, is maintained

Other workers

As the people who carry the main responsibility of dealing directly with users of our services, all workers must ensure that

- a) users are encouraged to make complaints if they feel aggrieved
- b) all complaints are reported to the Chief Executive. When the complaint is made specifically about this person, it should be reported directly to the IPA Board via the Chair of the organisation.
- c) delegated tasks from the IPA Board and/or Chief Executive in relation to a complaint are carried out
- d) confidentiality, where appropriate, is maintained

All workers will react to complaints with a positive attitude i.e.:

- a) thank the complainer for bringing the matter to your attention
- b) apologise for any inconvenience / distress caused
- c) assure them that you will investigate and deal with the problem promptly

- d) tell them that they will be informed of what we have done to resolve the complaint
- e) make action to resolve the complaint an urgent priority

Feedback

There needs to be a recognition of the fact that some aspects of the way we carry out the organisation's work, whether as individuals or a group, may be frustrating to people but may be felt not to warrant an official complaint. It is important, therefore, that opportunities are created for people to give feedback to the organisation in all areas of our work.