



SEND IASS Complaints Procedure

Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure to be followed when SEND IASS receives a complaint, comment or compliment from parents, carers, volunteers or other users.

SEND IASS is committed to continually improving the support it provides, and considers any feedback received will be an opportunity to

- listen, review, respond and take action/implement changes if necessary
- help shape future practice
- share best practice and celebrate achievements

Comments and Compliments

These include:

- Thanking us for something that has particularly pleased you.
- Suggestions for improving the service
- Letting us know that someone has gone over and above your expectations
- Feedback on the service we have provided or the work we have done

Comments or suggestions received will be passed onto the SEND IASS Manager for discussion and appropriate action. Compliments received will also be passed onto the relevant person for their information and records.

Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet from someone about the SEND IASS which requires a response. It may include:

- feeling disgruntled, disappointed or unhappy;
- feeling you were not treated with respect or courtesy; or an action, or lack of action by a SEND IASS worker that has led to you feeling anxious, worried or concerned.

Complaints should relate to events which occurred within the last 12 months.

All complaints will be investigated in line with this procedure. The complainant will always be informed of the outcome of the complaint.

Outcomes may include:

- an explanation
- an apology
- practical action
- implementation of change specific to the particular complaint
- review of practice.

Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by:

- Any service user who has accessed SEND IASS
 - Parents
 - Carers
 - Children
 - Young people
- Anyone working in partnership with SEND IASS
 - Staff
 - Volunteers
 - Professionals

Please note, this procedure is solely for complaints, comments and compliments about the service received from Newcastle SEND IASS.

It does not apply to the actions or decisions of an individual or organisation outside of the service.

How do I make a complaint, comment or compliment?

You will need to put any complaint, comment or compliment in writing in

- an email
- a letter

Is there an alternative to making a formal complaint?

Yes

Misunderstandings can often be sorted out on an informal basis.

You can contact the SEND IASS Manager who may be able to resolve the issue.

If the issue is not resolved, the formal complaints procedure can be started.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Complaints may be received through Newcastle city council's complaints procedure or directly through the service. The complaints process consists of two stages:

Stage 1 Response from SEND IASS Manager

Stage 2 Review by Newcastle Service Commissioner

Stage 1 Response from SEND IASS Lead Specialist

- the complaint is sent to the SEND IASS Manager
- a letter to acknowledge the complaint is sent within 3 working days
- if the complaint is about the SEND IASS Manager, the procedure will start at Stage 2.
- a full investigation into the circumstances surrounding the complaint will be carried out by the SEND IASS Manager. This may involve
 - talking to people concerned
- the person who has complained will receive a written response letter explaining
 - how the complaint investigation has been conducted
 - the outcomes of the investigation and
 - any actions to be taken.
- The person who has complained will be informed that they may request a Stage 2 complaint if they are still dissatisfied.
- A complaint will be responded to within 20 working days.
- In exceptional circumstances where a complaint will take longer than 20 days to investigate the person who has complained will be informed of this and the date by which they will receive a response.

Stage 2 Investigation or review by the SEND IASS Commissioner

All requests for Stage 2 investigation must be in writing to the SEND IASS Commissioner, the Head of SEND & Inclusion. This must be within 20 working days of the Stage 1 response letter and specify why the person complaining remains dissatisfied and what outcomes are being sought.

- An acknowledgement letter will be sent to the person complaining within 5 working days.
- The SEND IASS Commissioner will
 - review the complaint
 - make sure all relevant information has been considered

A Stage 2 complaint may take the form of an investigation or mediation.

Mediation

Mediation may be offered to help resolve the complaint. This will involve all the relevant parties meeting to discuss the complaint and agreeing a way forward to help resolve the complaint.

Investigation

An investigation will involve the SEND IASS Commissioner reviewing any initial investigation of the complaint to provide an independent and objective view.

This will involve contacting the complainant

- to clarify the complaints and desired outcomes
- if the outcomes sought cannot be achieved through the complaints procedure this will be explained and where possible an alternative route provided.

A full response will be sent to the person who has complained within 20 working days. This will include

- how the complaint has been investigated
- their findings
- outcomes and recommendations/actions to be taken.

In exceptional circumstances where an issue is complicated and will take longer than 20 days to investigate

- the person who has complained will be informed of this
- and the date by which they will receive the outcome of the investigation.

The SEND IASS Commissioner's decision will be final.

A record of discussions and decisions will be kept.

Recording and Monitoring Arrangements

Records of all complaints, comments and compliments will be

- kept on a confidential system. A copy of the confidentiality policy is on the SEND IASS website (currently under redevelopment)
- reported to and discussed at the SEND IASS Advisory Group meetings.

For Stage 1 complaints

SEND IASS Manager
Woodlands Children centre
Newton Place
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE7 7HD

For Stage 2 complaints

Head of SEND & Inclusion
Civic Centre
Barras Bridge
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8QH

Date of review: June 2023

Date of next review: June 2024