

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE / PROTOCOL

REFERENCE:

Child Care (Pre School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and
Child Care (Pre School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006

1.0 Purpose

To define the process for dealing with complaints against any Early Years Services as defined under the Child Care Act 1991 Part VII, and the Child Care (Pre School Services) (No2) Regulations 2006
All complaints received in relation to Pre-School Services as defined under the Child Care Act 1991 Part VII Child Care (Pre School Services) (No2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.
Complaints received relating to a child not under the remit of the Preschool Regulations.
Complaints received pertaining to a Non Notified Service.

2.0 Scope

All notified early years services

Referral of complaints relating to Non Notified services

N.B. The term ‘**complaint**’ is not intended to include matters of a child protection and welfare nature. Such matters should be considered, discussed and referred having regard to:-

- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children [DCYA 2011],
- Child Protection and welfare Practice Handbook [HSE 2011]
- National Standards for Preschool Services [DOHC 2010], and
- Our Duty to Care: The principles of good practice for the protection of children & young people (DOHC 2004) – see separate section

3.0 Responsibility

Early Years Inspection Service

4.0 Relevant Legislation / Documents:

Child Care Act 1991

Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 [S.I. No. 604 of 2006]

Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 [S.I. 643 of 2006].

Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No2) Regulations 2006 and Explanatory Guide to Requirements and Procedures for Notification and Inspection (DOH&C 2006)

National Standards for Preschool Services [DOHC 2010]

5.0 Relevant Forms

Complaints Form (Ref CP1)

Summary of Issues for the Provider (Ref CP2)

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Letter to complainant acknowledging complaint will be investigated (Ref CP3)
Report to provider regarding the complaint investigation (Ref CP4)
Letter to Complainant re outcome of investigation (Ref CP5)
Complaints Log (Ref CP6)

6.0 Procedure:

- 6.1 Where appropriate the complainant is given an opportunity to discuss their concern firstly with the provider and to revert to the Early Years Inspection Service as necessary.
- 6.2 If the complainant does not wish to speak directly with the provider the Early Years Inspection Team receives and documents the complaint details on the Complaints Form (CP1)
- 6.3 If the Early Years Inspection Team is unavailable the Early Years Administration Staff record the details of the complaint on the Complaints Form (CP1), and informs the relevant inspection team.
- 6.4 The Early Years Inspection Team will make contact with the complainant if possible and discuss the details of the complaint.
- 6.5 The Early Years Team will **Assess the Information** from the complainant and consider the following
 - Whether the complaint is within the scope of the legislation enforced by the HSE Early Years Inspection Service. If not the complainant will be informed and the Inspection team will refer the matter and/or the complainant to the appropriate service.
 - If the complaint relates to a child not under the remit of the Pre-School Regulations, the complainant will be informed of this and as necessary an appropriate referral made.
 - If the complaint refers to a non-notified service, the provider will receive a visit. The Early Years Inspection Team will ask permission to enter the service. It will be established if the service is required to notify and the provider will be advised accordingly. If access is denied a court warrant may be sought to gain access to the premises. All reasonable steps are taken and clearly recorded on file.
- 6.6 Where the complaint details are within the remit of the Pre-School Regulations **the following actions shall be taken:**
 - The complainant will be informed of the complaints process.
 - A letter, if name and address are available, is sent to the complainant acknowledging receipt of complaint and informing them that the matter is being investigated. (Ref CP3)
 - The Line Managers of the Early Years Inspection Team where appropriate may be informed of the complaint and the issues may be discussed.

- The service file is reviewed.
- A summary of the issues shall be prepared for the provider. A copy for the provider and a copy for the service file shall be completed. (Ref CP2)
- A visit to the service shall be arranged.

6.7 The Authorised Officer(s) **visits the service and carries out the following**

- a) The Authorised Officer introduces themselves and show identification and warrant to the person in charge at the service. The Authorised Officer(s) explains to the service provider that the purpose of the visit is to investigate a complaint.
- b) The Authorised Officer(s) explains clearly to the provider the steps involved in the complaints process:
- c) The prepared written details of the complaint are offered to the provider. (Ref CP2)
- d) The Authorised Officer will proceed to inspect the facility, review files and/or investigate complaint details with relevant staff in order to review issues relating to the complaint.
- e) Based on their findings during the investigation the Authorised Officer may need to proceed and carry out a full inspection of the service in conjunction with the investigation of the complaint.
- f) If a full inspection is required the Authorised Officer(s) will refer to procedure for full inspection. A separate report will be issued in relation to the investigation of the complaint (Ref CP4) and the Inspection Outcome Report will be issued following the full inspection.
- g) Any verbal response from the service is noted and recorded on file. (Ref CP1).

6.8 The authorised officer may inform their line Manager, Children & Family Services of the outcome of their visit where appropriate.

6.9 Any responses from the provider to CP2 will be considered before completion of the report.

6.10 The Authorised Officer shall write to the provider informing him/her of the outcome of the complaint investigation, any proposed action taken (Ref CP4).

6.11 Forward the final letter to the complainant (Ref CP5) stating complaint has been investigated.

6.12 Should either party wish to seek a review of the findings and outcome of the investigation in relation to the complaint, they may do so in writing.

6.13 Appropriate action shall be taken in line with Inspection SOP.

7.0 Review and Follow Up

The Early Years Inspection Team may carry out a full inspection of the service / follow up visit to ensure that the actions required outlined by the Pre-School Inspection Team are enacted.

8.0 Reporting and Record Keeping / Filing

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All relevant memos and notes to be attached to the complaints form. (Ref CP1)
The Complaints form and all relevant correspondence to be filed in the service file.
Follow up visit specific to the complaint filed with complaint.
All information is logged on to the complaints log.

Definition of Terms;

Upheld – there is evidence to support the complaint received

Not upheld – there is insufficient evidence to support the complaint received

Partially upheld – identifies areas of the complaint that were upheld and those that were not upheld

The line managers of the early years inspection team shall be informed of the following complaints and shall forward a copy of the completed complaint form to the National Specialist, Early Years Service

- Death of a child
- Serious injury to a child
- Where a child goes missing from a service

9.0 Comments / complaints in regard to a service offered by the HSE¹⁵

If any person [*a early years service provider or employee*] has a comment or complaint to make in regard to the service offered by any member of the Early Years Inspection Team, they can:-

- Talk to any member of HSE staff, service manager or complaints officer.
- Email yoursay@hse.ie with your comment, compliment or complaint.
- Send a letter or fax to any HSE location.
- Ring the HSE at 1850 24 1850.
- Use the HSE website comments and compliments facility at www.hse.ie
- See www.healthcomplaints.ie for further information.

How will a complaint be dealt with?

- Depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint:
 - a staff member/service manager will attempt to resolve the complaint locally; or
 - a complaints officer will look into the issues raised in the complaint.

Comments and Complaints will be followed up having regard to “Your Service Your Say” – HSE Complaints Policy and Procedures Manual [2009].

¹⁵ Adopted from “National Healthcare Charter – you and your health service. Your Service Your Say. Tell us...your feedback” [HSE Leaflet 2012]

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CP1(a)

6.1 EARLY YEARS / PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES INSPECTION CP1 COMPLAINT RECORD	
COMPLAINT DETAILS	
Complaint Reference No.:	
Received By:	
Date Received:	Time Received:
Position	
Received by:	Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Written Correspondence <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the service:	Notified <input type="checkbox"/> Not-Notified <input type="checkbox"/>
COMPLAINANT DETAILS	
<p>The complainant may be informed that the complaint will be investigated. The complainant should be advised that the Early Years Inspection Team will endeavour to keep the complainants details confidential. However the Early Years inspection Team cannot guarantee confidentiality as such details may be released on foot of an order of the court or a decision of the information commissioner.(Freedom of Information Act 1997 and Amendment Act 2003)</p>	
Is the complainant remaining anonymous?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the complainant requesting anonymity?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Name of Complainant:	
Address of Complainant:	
	Telephone No:
Relationship of Complainant with Early years service e.g.:	
Parent/Staff Member	
Complaint Relates To	
Early Years Service Name:	
Address:	

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Type of Service:		
Full details of Complaint:		
Was the complaint referred to another HSE department/other agency?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details:		
Was the “Standard Report Form for reporting child protection and/or welfare concerns to the HSE” ¹⁶ completed and forwarded to the Social Work Department for Children and Family Services?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details:		

COMPLAINT ACTION			
Date of Investigation:			
Inspection <input type="checkbox"/>	Advice <input type="checkbox"/>	Referral <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Was a response received from the provider Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Complaint Outcome	Upheld <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment	
	Not Upheld <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment	
	Partially Upheld <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment	
	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment	
SIGNED			
Inspection Authorised officer	1.	2.	

¹⁶ Accessible at www.hse.ie/go/childrenfirst

If this SOP is not fully followed, the reason for doing so should be clearly recorded and brought to the attention of the HSE manager of the service without delay. It should be recorded on the file.

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Close out date::	
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CP2(a)

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT DETAILS FOR THE SERVICE PROVIDER

Date ____ / ____ / 20__

Summary of Complaint given to - _____

Complaint re: (Name of Service)

The following issues were identified in the complaint made to the Pre-School Inspection Team on the (insert date).

Cite Regulation:
(E.G. Regulation 8 Management and Staffing)

Issues Recorded: _____

Regulation:

Issues recorded: _____

Written representation may be made in response to the above within 10 working days to (name and address).

Yours sincerely,

Early Years Inspection Service

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CP3(a)

Date

Name and Address

Dear.....

I write with reference to your telephone call/letter/e-mail received on regarding the complaint you made on

(Include one of the following)

(I wish to advise you that the matter will be investigated and we will revert to you following the completion of the investigation into the concerns raised by you.)

(I wish to advise you that the complaint did not fall within the remit of the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 and the Childcare (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006. However I have referred the matter to (name the agency, person contact details). You may wish to contact (name) directly to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely,

Early Years Inspection Service

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CP4(a)

Report Re Complaint

Date

Name & Address

Re: Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006

Dear

I write with reference to the inspection by (names of pre-school inspection team) as authorised officers of the Health Service Executive of (name of premises) on the (date). The purpose of the inspection was to investigate a complaint received on the *date*

Complaint Details (Example)

Regulation 8 Management and Staffing The complaint issues [in summary]
--

Response from (name of the provider) noted.
E.g. Regulation 8 Management and Staffing

Actions Required
E.g. Regulation 8 Management and Staffing

Outcome: (Upheld, Not Upheld, Partially Upheld and Other)

This report represents the outcome of the investigation of the above complaint and completes the investigation of the complaint.

Should you wish to seek a review of the above findings and investigation outcome in relation to this complaint, you may do so in writing to (name, address and contact details of the designated Officer.) within 10 working days.

Yours sincerely,

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CP5(a)

Date

Name & Address

Re: Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006

Dear _____,

I write with reference to your phone call/letter/e mail received on regarding a complaint you made.....

I wish to inform you that the matter has been investigated by the Early Years Inspection team. Following assessment / investigation a number of areas have been highlighted under the above Regulations which require to be addressed.

A number of areas are required to be addressed:

-
-

Or

Should you wish to seek a review of the above in relation to this complaint, you may do so in writing to (name, address and contact details of the designated Officer.) within 10 working days.

(I wish to inform you that the matter has been investigated by the Early Years Inspection Team and no evidence relating to the complaint was found during the investigation.)

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further clarification.

Yours sincerely,

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CP6(a)

EARLY YEARS SERVICES COMPLAINTS LOG							
Complaint No.	Date Complaint Received	Source: Parent/ Employee/ Other	Premises Name and Address	Nature of Complaint	Action (Inspection, Advice, Referral, Other)	Outcome Upheld Not Upheld Partially Upheld	Close out Date

Definition of Terms:

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Partially Upheld – identifies areas of the complaint that were upheld and those that were not upheld

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