

# BECOME.

THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE  
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

## Complaints procedure

<b>Date created</b>	March 2024	<b>Next review due</b>	March 2026
<b>Owner</b>	F&PT	<b>Access status</b>	ALL

### Introduction

This policy sets out the procedures Become will follow when we receive a complaint from users of our service, from another organisation or a member of the public. It does not address complaints made by staff or volunteers (these are dealt with through our grievance, whistleblowing and disciplinary procedures), but young people who are involved in participation work with Become should use this procedure if they need to raise a complaint.

The definition of staff for the purpose of this complaints procedure covers workers, employees, consultants, advisors, sessional workers and volunteers who work with Become from time to time on projects.

The procedure is meant to provide a method to resolve a dispute between Become and any external complainant.

### Statement

Become aims to provide an excellent standard of service to all those we come into contact with. If we fail to do this we want to know about it. This will enable us not only to address the specific problem, but also to ensure that we are always improving our service.

### Dealing with complaints

When someone wishes to register a complaint, the following procedure should be adopted.

The complaint should be submitted by e-mail or via the contact form on our website, or by a request to make a verbal complaint. The Chief Executive (Katharine Sacks-Jones) will always be informed when a complaint is received.

### Stage 1

The complainant will be invited to speak to the appropriate internal manager to discuss the complaint. This can be done in person, by phone, or through an online meeting, whichever is appropriate.

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The manager must keep a record of the conversation on the complaints monitoring form. The manager will endeavour to resolve the matter. A copy of the record of the discussion can be sent to a complainant on request.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied then a request to move to stage 2 can be made.

*Stage 1 should be completed within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.*

### **Stage 2**

The complainant should be asked to put any complaint in writing (preferably by e-mail) to the manager, marked 'Private and Confidential', providing as much detail as possible.

If the complainant is not able to put the complaint in writing, the complainant will be offered a conversation with the manager or an alternative suitable staff member.

The role of the manager or nominee at this meeting will be confined to putting the complaint in writing, obtaining the complainant's approval of the written complaint, and asking the complainant to sign or electronically confirm to indicate agreement with the contents. The complainant may choose to work with a third party if they wish.

The manager will then investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve it. The manager may delegate any aspect of the investigation to a nominee.

If the complaint involves a member(s) of staff, the manager should offer the opportunity for the member of staff to put forward their account, either by written statement or by presentation at a meeting.

The manager will ensure that all complainants receive a response in writing within 10 working days of the complaint being escalated to Stage 2. This letter will summarise what investigations have been carried out and what action, if any, is proposed to resolve the matter. A copy of this letter should be stored securely within Become's SharePoint system.

If a written response is unsuitable, the complainant will be offered a discussion with the manager to provide the response verbally. This meeting should be held within 10 working days. A written record of this interview will be kept and should be signed or electronically confirmed by the complainant.

If the complainant is not satisfied at this stage they can request for the matter to be dealt with under Stage 3 of the complaints procedure.

*Stage 2 should be completed within **10** working days of a request to escalate a complaint to Stage 2.*

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## Stage 3

Where the matter is not resolved by Stage 2 and a referral is requested by the complainant, the manager should immediately refer the complaint to the Chief Executive, forwarding copies of all written correspondence to them. Should the complaint be in relation to the Chief Executive, the complaint will be addressed by the Chair of Trustees or their nominated representative.

The complainant will be informed immediately by the Chief Executive (or Chair of Trustees/nominated representative, if relevant) about what is being done and informed that they will also be contacting the staff member(s), against whom the complaint is made.

The Chief Executive (or Chair of Trustees/nominated representative) will review the decision made at Stage 2 and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved.

*Stage 3 should be completed within 20 working days of a request to escalate a complaint to Stage 3.*

The Chief Executive (or Chair of Trustees/nominated representative) will notify the complainant of its decisions and the reasons for its decisions within 20 working days of having received notice of the complaint. The Chief Executive's decision (or that of the Chair of Trustees/nominated representative) will be final. The Chief Executive (or Chair of Trustees/nominated representative) will be responsible for ensuring records of the meeting are kept.

Ultimately, if the complainant is unhappy with the decision that has been communicated at Stage 3 they may, in certain circumstances, be able to complain to the relevant regulator. Details of who to contact are available on the Gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

## Recording and monitoring complaints

All complaints will be documented and kept on file, including those which were resolved without being put in writing. All complaints will be treated in confidence.

## Publicising the procedure

All managers are responsible for ensuring that all external parties, as appropriate, are aware that we have a complaints procedure.