

Complaints Policy

Rationale:

This complaints procedure sets out how Donyland Lodge will deal with any complaints about care or education.

All members of our community should feel able to express their views in the full knowledge that they will be dealt with fairly. All complaints are important to us and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness. Our primary concern is the quality of care, education and welfare of each young person, and their physical and emotional wellbeing. Whenever a complaint is upheld every effort will be made to rectify the issue and, if necessary, action will be taken to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem.

This policy is not intended to cover those aspects where the law sets specific procedures. Where there are complaints of this nature, reference will be made to the relevant acts.

The aims of this procedure are:

- To provide an accessible and easily understood procedure for complaints;
- To encourage parents and carers, social workers from the placing local authority, people from the local neighbourhood, and members of the Donyland Lodge community to express their views through the appropriate channels;
- To increase mutual understanding between all parties;
- To create an ethos where all are committed to working together for the benefit of each young person.

Whether a complaint is made informally or formally, all parties involved should make every effort to respect confidentiality. All parties should be assured that making a complaint would not adversely affect the young person and the young person needs to feel that they will be listened to regardless of the level of seriousness and without any fear of reprisal against them.

Upon admission to Donyland Lodge, each young person is given a copy of the complaints procedure in the *Welcome Booklet*. A member of staff will go through this procedure soon after their arrival and ensure they have clear understanding of how to make a complaint. The importance of these procedures is stressed in the induction of new staff.

Comprehensive training is provided for all staff in accordance with the requirements laid out in the CSA 2000 16.6 and the Donyland Lodge staff guidance.

All young people have access to the independent visitor (Regulation 33) who is neutral of the organisation, to which they can talk in private and, if required, ask assistance to make a complaint on their behalf. Donyland Lodge currently has service links to the Colchester Young Minds Project and Barnardos, who can provide advocates to Essex LAC free of charge. Young people from outside the county will incur a charge which will be met by Donyland Lodge.

As it is possible that the parent or carer of a young person in the care of Donyland Lodge, a person with parental responsibility, or any social worker or other local authority representative may wish to make a complaint, upon a young person's admission to Donyland Lodge, parents, carers or those with parental responsibility, and social workers are given a copy of the complaints procedure. In such a circumstance the complaint may be sent in writing to the Homes Manager, or a complaints form completed. In addition to this process, complaints may be made directly to Ofsted on 0300 1231231.

Donyland Lodge recognise the rights of all young people in our care, their parents or those with parental responsibility, and any social worker or other local authority representative. Staff work to help to give a young person the confidence to raise matters that concern him, assuring him that he will be listened to and treated fairly. The experience of being listened to and treated fairly will hopefully give the person the confidence to broach more serious matters in the future, should the need arise.

If anyone wishes to make a complaint, staff will assist and support. Where a problem arises, it may be possible to resolve the issue satisfactorily before a formal complaint is made. The aim should be to resolve any dissatisfaction as near to the point at which it arose as possible. However, attempts at problem solving should not be used to divert an eligible person from lodging a complaint under the statutory procedure.

Staff must also recognise the right of a young person to access the complaints procedure of their placing authority and must be supported in doing this. In addition to this young people, staff, parents and placing authorities have the right to make complaints directly to Ofsted on 0300 1231231.