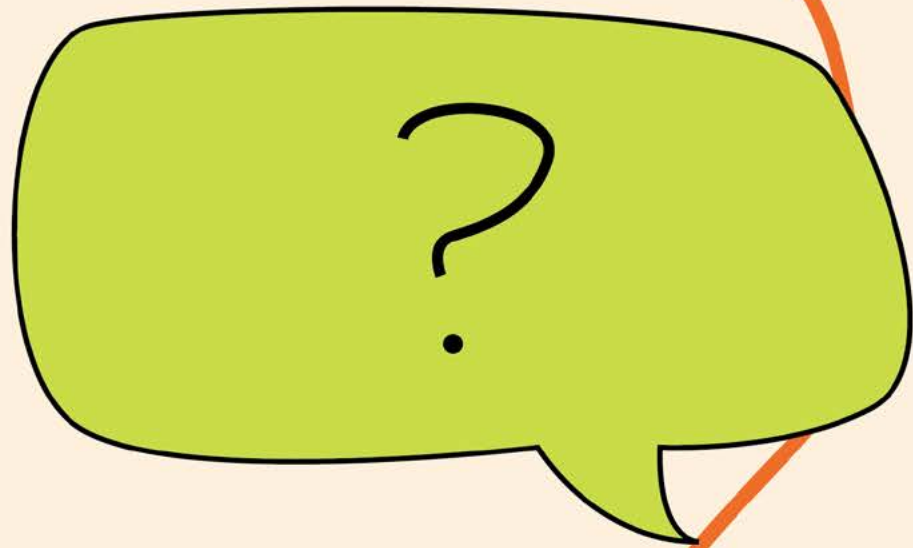
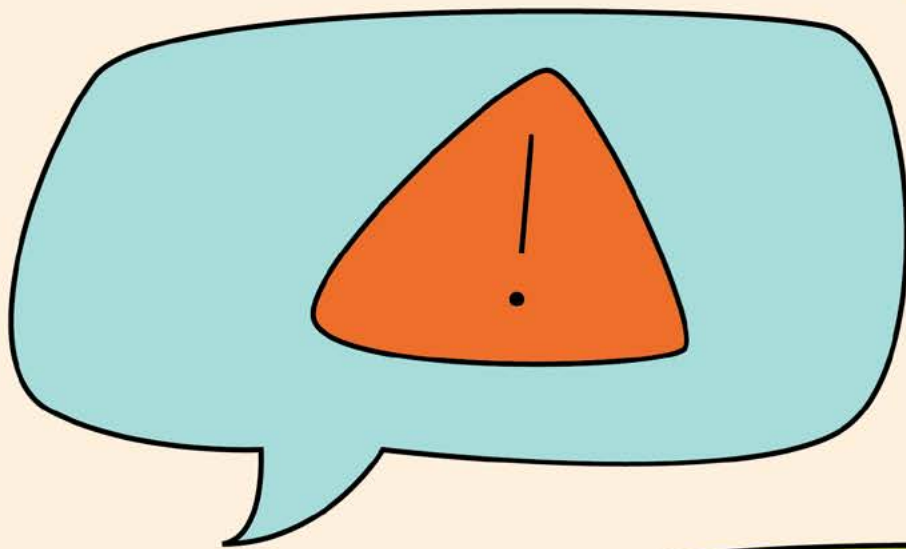




# **Children and Young Person's Guide to**

**How to Make a Complaint**

**If you need help reading this, ask your Foster Carer, a Social Worker or a trusted adult like a teacher.**

## What is a Complaint?

A complaint is when you tell someone that something is not good enough, needs improving, or you are not happy with it.

You might complain about:

- Your situation.
- Your foster placement.
- The way you are being treated.

We want you to be happy in your foster home. You have the right to complain about anything that affects you while you stay with us.

## Complaining is not a bad thing

We think it is the opposite, as it helps us get things right for you and those who follow you.

Telling us when you think things are going well is also really important too – so we know it's a good idea to carry on doing what we do.

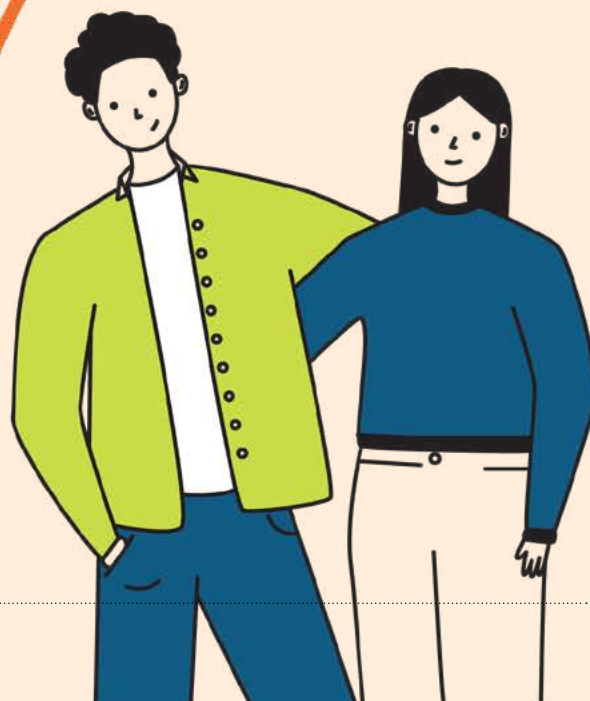
## This leaflet will help you understand:

- What you can complain about.
- Who can help you to make a complaint.
- The different stages or steps you will go through.
- What to expect.

## How to make a complaint

There are many ways to make a complaint—in writing, face-to-face, by email, by telephone, or by getting someone else to speak for you. You can ask anyone you like to help you, and you can take them to all the meetings.

You won't get into trouble for making a complaint about something you are not happy with. We will try to help you fix it.



# If you want to make a complaint, this is what you can do

## Stage 1

Write to or tell the Registered Manager about your complaint (the Registered Manager is the Manager of the fostering service in your local area). If you are not sure who the Registered Manager is, you can ask your carer or anyone from Five Rivers.

They will happily talk to you and everyone involved in your problem and will try to find a way to fix it.

Within 10 working days, they will write to you explaining how they have fixed your complaint. If it is a tricky problem to fix, they may take another 10 working days to get their answer to you. If you are not happy with their response, you can go to stage 2.

If your problem is really serious, we may go straight to stage 2.

## Stage 2

If, after reading the response, you feel your complaint has not been sorted out, you must let the Fostering Operations Manager know within 7 days.

The Fostering Operations Manager manages the Registered Manager. They will pass your complaint to someone who has not been involved up until now so that they look at the complaint fairly. This person is called an 'Investigating Officer'.

Within 25 working days, the Investigating Officer will write a report explaining what they have found and what should be done to fix the problem.

The Fostering Operations Manager will receive a copy of this report and write to you to explain what happens next. Sometimes,

if there is a lot to sort out for you, it can take longer to make sure this is done properly.

Then, we will let the Investigating Officer have up to 65 days to talk to everyone involved and write their report. If you are not happy with their report, you can go to stage 3.

## Stage 3

This is the final stage of the complaint process. Within 7 days of receiving the report, you must tell them why you do not agree with their answers. The complaint will then be looked at by the Head of Fostering Operations and a member of the Board of Directors (the Board of Directors are a group of people who steer the organisation).

They might ask someone from outside Five Rivers to help them to make sure that nothing has been missed by the Investigating Officer, and help them to reach their final decision.

## Finally

Within 28 days, you will get a letter from the Head of Fostering Operations at Five Rivers. They will tell you what has been decided about your complaint and the reasons for this final decision. They might choose to 'uphold your complaint', which means that, with your help, they have found something that needs to be sorted out by Five Rivers and they will tell you how this is going to be fixed.

Or, they might choose 'not to uphold your complaint,' which means that they have not found anything that Five Rivers needs to sort out and do not intend to take any further action.

## Keeping you safe until your problem is fixed

If you tell us something serious that we feel is putting you (or someone else) at risk, we will need to tell different people and organisations.

These people include:

Ofsted, Your Local Authority, Social Worker, Police & Local Safeguarding Authority.

In some serious cases, if the complaint is about our Foster Carers, or people who visit the foster home, or a member of Five Rivers staff, we will make sure you are kept safe and make sure you do not have to see that person until your complaint is investigated.

If you do not agree with the way Five Rivers has tried to sort out your complaint, we will help you find someone outside of the Agency who you can talk to, for example an Advocate, or your Independent Reviewing Officer.

### An Advocate –

This is someone who will listen to you and work with you to help you find the best way to solve an issue or get your point of view across. The advocate will help you make sure your wishes and feelings are heard and responded to. Each area use a different advocacy service. Contact the Children's Commissioner, and they will give you the details of which advocacy service will listen to you. You can call them on: 0800 528 0731 or email [help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk).

### Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) -

Everyone child has an IRO. The IRO makes sure everyone involved in your care is doing the best for you in your foster home. They really care about what you think and feel. They will listen to you and others involved in your care and make sure everybody is doing what is best for you.

You can also find the details of your Independent Reviewing Officer in your Care Plan.

To speak to your Independent Reviewing Officer, email [feedback@five-rivers.org](mailto:feedback@five-rivers.org) and we will put you in touch.

**If you have followed the steps in the document and still need help, email**

[feedback@five-rivers.org](mailto:feedback@five-rivers.org)

### Ofsted

If you have followed the steps in this guide and it hasn't helped, you can contact Ofsted.

Ofsted are the people who inspect all fostering services to make sure that we are looking after children properly. If you have followed the steps in this procedure and you think we are not doing our best for you, they will listen and try to help.

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)