



Complaints Policy and Procedures 2026

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1.Complaints Policy Statement

Integrating:

- is committed to providing a good standard of quality services to members, their families, other agencies and organisations
- will take seriously any concern or complaint and will investigate promptly, for a resolution as quickly as possible
- recognises that all members, their families, other agencies and organisations
 - have the right to raise concerns or complaints about our services
 - have access to clear information on how to voice complaints and raise concerns
- recognises that the concerns and complaints procedure is open to everyone who receives or requests a service from Integrating and anyone acting on their behalf
- will provide a leaflet outlining the procedure which is available to anyone who asks for it
- will deal with complaints in line with GDPR principles
- will keep a register of all complaints, which will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Team and at least annually by Trustees
- recognises that the complaints procedure will be part of the process of monitoring the quality, effectiveness and non-discriminatory nature of its services

All staff, volunteers and Trustees are required to read, understand and comply with this policy and its procedures.

Complaints will be managed by The Complaints officer (Business Manager)

2. Introduction

2.1 Integrating strives for high standards in service delivery and welcomes feedback from users of our service, parents and carers and anyone who works with us, on all aspects of our service. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our work.

2.2 The objectives of Integrating's complaints policy and procedures are to:

- Ensure everyone knows how to make a complaint and how a complaint will be handled
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear time frames
- Provide individuals with a fair and effective way to complain about our service
- Ensure that complaints are monitored to improve our services

2.3 Integrating will ensure that we:

- Listen carefully to complaints, take them seriously and treat complaints as confidential, where possible
- Record, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the GDPR principles
- Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated time frame
- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal
- Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented in order to ensure that there is no re-occurrence
- Report on an annual basis the number of complaints received, the outcomes and any actions taken.

3. Definition of a complaint

3.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual.

3.2 Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the likelihood of their developing into formal complaints.

3.3 If you have any concerns about our service, please tell any member of staff, a volunteer or Trustee at any of our events, activities, or at the office as soon as possible, so they can quickly understand your concerns and try to put things right.

Any representative of Integrating in receipt of a verbal complaint will:

- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Record the facts of the complaint
- Note the relationship of the complainant to the member of Integrating
- Inform the complainant of the Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Tell the complainant what to expect and how long it will take

Integrating aims to settle most complaints quickly and satisfactorily by the member of support staff who provides the service. We expect the complaint to be resolved quickly by way of an apology or by an acceptable explanation to the individual. Complaints will be handled by The Complaints Office – Business Manager (Project Manager as back up).

3.4 If you are not happy with the response to your concern and/or want to make a formal complaint, please follow the procedure below.

4. Complaints Procedure

4.1. There are three stages to the complaint's procedure:

- Stage One – informal complaint
- Stage Two – formal complaint
- Stage Three - appeal (if dissatisfied with the resolution at Stage Two)

By letter	By email
The Complaints Officer Integrating Bullion Hall South Approach Chester le Street Co. Durham DH2 2DW	The Complaints Officer info@integrating.org.uk

5. Stage One – Informal Complaint

5.1 It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis. Concerns should be raised as soon as possible to any member of staff at Integrating. Complainants should not approach individual Trustees to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 3 of the procedure. At the conclusion of the investigation, The Complaints Officer will acknowledge the complaint **within 5 working days** and provide an informal written response **within 10 working days** of the date of receipt of the complaint.

5.2 Occasionally investigations may take longer. Should this be the case, a holding letter will be sent **after ten working days** and a final date given for a conclusion to be reached.

5.3 If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

6. Stage Two – Formal Complaint

6.1 Formal complaints must be made to The Business Manager in person, by email or in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form).

Safeguarding matters will be reported to the LA and advice acted upon prior to any investigation by Integrating. Any issues affecting the organisation's reputation will be reported to the Project Manager and Chair for information and any subsequent action. Issues involving criminal activity will be reported to the Police and any advice acted upon prior to any investigation of the complaint.

6.2 The date the complaint is received is recorded and The Business Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) **within 5 working days**.

6.3 The Business Manager can consider whether a face-to-face investigation meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this. If so, this will be arranged within **ten working days** of receiving the written complaint. The Complaints Officer is free to invite any other member of Integrating for advice on specific issues or for safety concerns. The complainant can bring along somebody for support or to speak on

their behalf. A written response provided to the complainant within **five working days** of the investigation meeting. This is the end of the complaint.

7. Stage Three - Appeal

7.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 – an Appeal Panel Hearing (see Annexe 3) on completion of an Appeal Panel Hearing Form **within 5 working days** of the written response to Stage Two. This panel will consist of an Appeals Trustee (Vice-Chair with Chair as back up) and two other Trustees. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

7.2 The Complaints Officer will acknowledge receipt of the Appeal Panel Hearing Form **within five working days** and invite the complainant to attend an Appeal Panel Hearing. The Appeal Panel Hearing will take place **within 10 working days** of the acknowledgement letter. The Complaints Officer will have circulated the Stage 2 report to the panel with any correspondence from the complainant.

7.3 The Appeal Panel Hearing will take place at Bullion Hall. The complainant can bring a person to support or to speak for them at the hearing. However, a solicitor acting in a legal capacity cannot attend as the Appeal Hearing is not a legal proceeding.

7.4 The complainant should be informed in writing of the panel's decision and any action taken **within 5 working days** of the hearing. The Appeal Panel may uphold the action taken at Stage Two or make any changes/recommendations. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final although this does not prevent the complainant from pursuing the matter further through any appropriate legal proceedings.

7.5 If the complainant is still not satisfied with the result, they should be advised that there is no further right of appeal with Integrating. An appeal can be made to an external agency like the Charity Commission. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can be involved in can be found on their website at www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx.

As part of our agreements with the local authority, there is a complaints procedure through Durham County Council – please see www.durham.gov.uk/complaints for further information.

8. Data protection

8.1 To process a complaint, Integrating will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides, and which other people give in response to the complaint. We will hold this data securely to comply with GDPR principles and only use it to address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public. However, it may not be possible to

preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

8.2 Integrating will normally destroy complaints files in a secure manner six years after the complaint has been closed.

9. Monitoring

9.1 Complaints are an important tool which, alongside data provided by user feedback and focus groups, will allow us to learn about the services we provide. They provide a useful source of information about how individuals see our services and how we are serving them. To ensure we can learn from complaints, the following data will be collected:

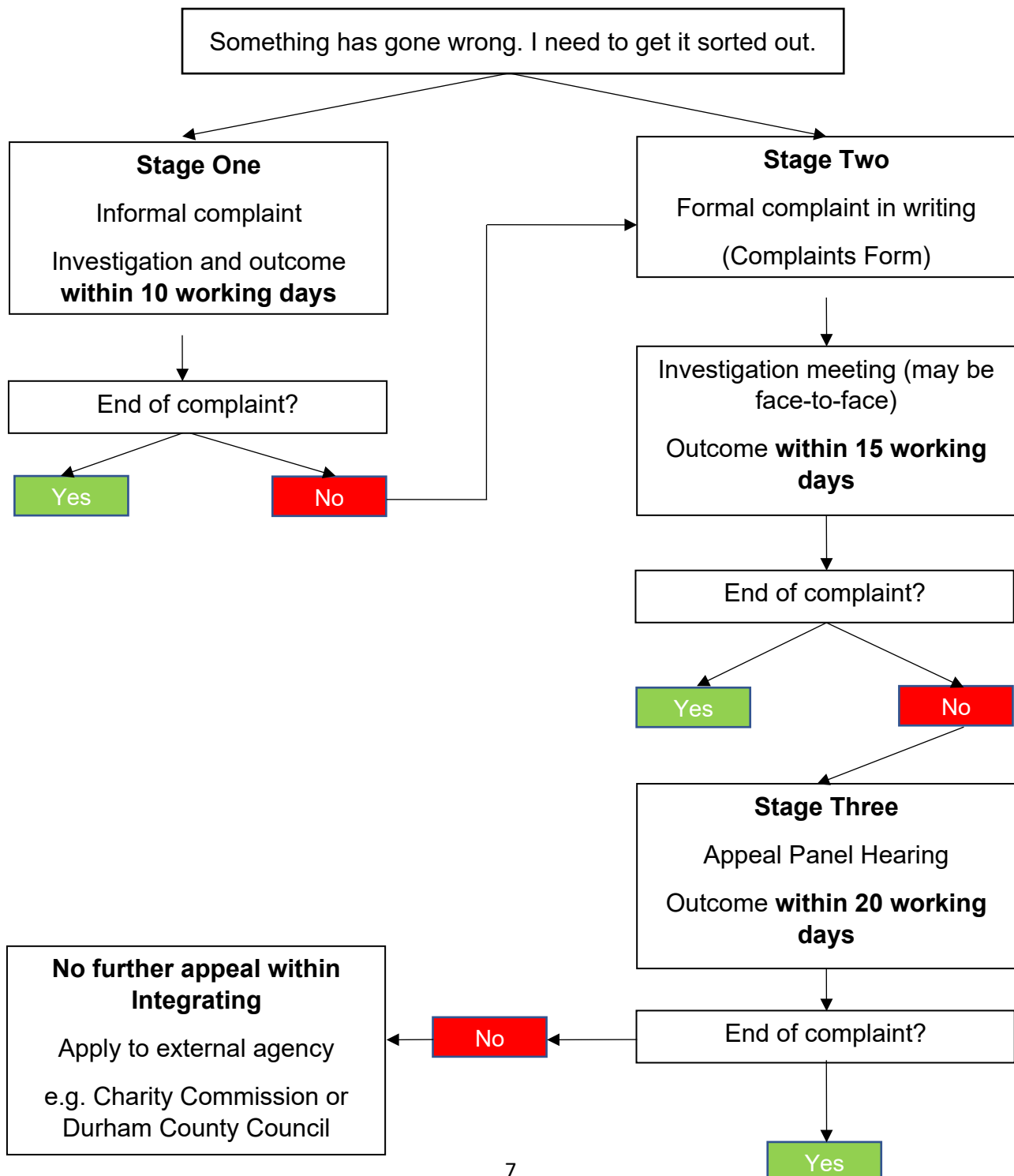
- Name and address
- Name of person dealing with the complaint
- Date of complaint and response
- Nature of complaint
- Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the complaint

9.2 Complaints information will be considered on a regular basis by the Senior Team and reported annually to Trustees. Wherever possible the data will be used to improve and develop the service.

Annex A: Making a complaint procedure

Integrating tries to make its service for children, young people and adults fun, helpful and safe. However, sometimes things go wrong and to make sure this does not happen again, we need to know what has happened and how you feel about so we can do things differently.

Any area of dissatisfaction is a complaint and as such, should be brought to the attention of staff as soon as possible.



Annexe B: Formal Complaint Form

Please complete and return to The Business Manager, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:	
Member of Integrating's name (if relevant):	
Your relationship to the member of Integrating (if appropriate):	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Daytime telephone:	Evening telephone number
Email address:	
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have been spoken to anybody at Integrating about it.	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature

Date

Official use only

Date of acknowledgement sent

Course of action

Investigation

☐

Face-to-face
meeting

☐

Meeting date offered

Meeting date confirmed

Annexe C: Appeal Panel Hearing Request Form

Please complete and return to The Business Manager, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:	
Member of Integrating's name (if relevant):	
Your relationship to the member of Integrating (if appropriate):	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Daytime telephone:	Evening telephone number
Email address:	
Please give details of the resolution to your complaint from Stage Two	
How do you feel the outcome needs to change at this stage?	

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature

Date

Official use only

Date of acknowledgement sent

Appeal Panel Meeting date offered

Appeal Panel Meeting date confirmed

Appeal Panel Hearing Trustees