



Richmond House

Social Care Services CIC

**Children and Young
People Complaint
Procedure
2026 - 2027**



Children and Young People Complaint Procedure 2026 – 2027

Key Changes for 2026–2027

Section	Key Change
Legal Framework	Added Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and LGSCO Joint Complaint Handling Code (2026)
Complaint Process	Updated to reflect two-stage statutory process for children's social care complaints
Timescales	Revised Stage 2 investigation timeframe: 25 to 65 working days
LGSCO	Updated to reflect new Complaint Handling Code effective 1 April 2026
Safeguarding	Updated to reflect Working Together to Safeguard Children May 2025 update with new resources
Duty of Candour	Enhanced Regulation 20 requirements for openness and apologies
Accessibility	New commitment to child-friendly formats including illustrated guides

1. Introduction

Richmond House Social Care Services is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and high-quality service for all children, young people, and their families.

We believe that every child and young person has the right to:

- Be heard and listened to
- Be taken seriously
- Receive support to express their views
- Be kept safe from harm
- Be treated with dignity and respect

This procedure explains how children, young people, parents, carers, and representatives can raise concerns, complaints, or suggestions about the service they receive.

Legal Framework

This procedure follows:

- **The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006**
- **Children and Families Act 2014**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (May 2025 update)**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026**
- **LGSCO Joint Complaint Handling Code (effective 1 April 2026)**
- **Relevant Care Quality Commission (CQC) standards, including Regulation 16 (Receiving and Acting on Complaints) and Regulation 20 (Duty of Candour)**
- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**



What You Can Complain About

You may complain about:

- The quality, suitability, or delivery of a service
- The attitude, behaviour, or professionalism of staff
- How assessments, reviews, or eligibility criteria are applied
- A Richmond House policy that directly affects you or your child
- The way your original complaint has been handled

Safeguarding

Important: If a complaint indicates possible abuse, neglect, or safeguarding concerns, Richmond House will immediately notify the Local Authority Safeguarding Team in line with statutory safeguarding procedures under Working Together to Safeguard Children.

2. Suggestions & Feedback

We welcome **feedback and suggestions** for improvement. Children, young people, parents, carers, and staff may:

Method	Details
Speak in person	Directly to the Registered Manager or Deputy
Suggestion box	Place written suggestions in the box at Richmond House facilities
Online form	www.rhscs.org.uk/feedback
Email	suggestion@rhscs.org.uk
Text/WhatsApp	07484 371525
Post	Richmond House, 96 Main Street, North Frodingham, Driffield, YO25 8LJ

All suggestions will be:

- Acknowledged within 5 working days
- Reviewed at monthly team meetings
- Feedback to the person who made the suggestion

3. Who Can Complain

A complaint may be made by:

- Any child or young person receiving services
- Parents, carers, or family members
- Advocates, professionals, or representatives (with consent)



- Representatives acting on behalf of a child who cannot complain themselves, or who has died

Under section 26(3) and section 24D of the Children Act 1989, every local authority in England is required to establish a procedure for considering certain complaints about children's services.

Advocacy Support

Independent advocacy support is available to ensure children and young people are able to make their voices heard. We can help you access advocacy services through:

- **NYAS** (National Youth Advocacy Service) – 0808 808 1001
- **Childline** – 0800 1111
- **Local authority advocacy services**

4. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints can be made:

Method	Notes
In person	Speak to any member of staff
By telephone	07484 371525
Through a staff member	They will help you record your concern
By email	complaints@rhscs.org.uk
By letter	Richmond House, 96 Main Street, North Frodingham, Driffield, YO25 8LJ
Through an advocate	We can arrange independent support
Online form	www.rhscs.org.uk/complaints
Text/WhatsApp	07484 371525

Note: If a complaint is made verbally, it will be recorded in writing and a copy provided to the complainant within 3 working days.

5. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be investigated wherever possible. However, providing contact details helps us to:



- Keep you informed of progress
- Share the outcome of the investigation
- Ask clarifying questions if needed
- Offer support during the process

6. Responsibility

The Registered Manager has overall responsibility for handling complaints. They may appoint a senior member of staff to investigate, but remain accountable for the outcome.

Support Available

Support will be offered to ensure complainants:

- Understand the process
- Can access independent advice or advocacy
- Are kept informed throughout
- Feel safe and supported

7. Complaint Handling Process

The children's social care statutory complaints procedure follows a **two-stage process** in line with current statutory guidance:

Stage 1: Local Resolution

Step	Action	Timescale
1. Acknowledgment	Written acknowledgment with contact details of the person handling the complaint	Within 5 working days
2. Investigation	Investigation by an appropriate manager with authority to resolve issues (Service Manager or above)	Commenced immediately
3. Updates	Complainants kept informed of progress	At least every 10 working days
4. Outcome	Written response provided with findings, actions, and resolution proposals	Within 28 working days (unless alternative timescale agreed)



Outcome Letter Will Include

- A summary of findings
- Any action taken or to be taken
- Proposals for resolution
- Information on next steps if you remain dissatisfied, including how to request Stage 2

Follow-Up

A **follow-up meeting** may be offered to ensure:

- The outcome is **understood**
- Next actions are **clear**
- Any remaining concerns are **addressed**

Stage 2: Independent Investigation

If you are not satisfied with the Stage 1 response, you can request escalation to Stage 2.

Aspect	Detail
Investigation	Independent Investigation Officer and Independent Person appointed
Timescale	25 to 65 working days
Adjudication	Response adjudicated by a Senior Manager
Statement	A Statement of Complaint will be agreed with you

Stage 2 involves a formal independent investigation overseen by an Independent Person. The whole Stage 2 process should be completed within a maximum of 65 working days.

Stage 3: External Review (Ombudsman)

Following completion of Stage 2, if you remain dissatisfied, you may refer your complaint to the **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)**.



8. Time Limits

Rule	Detail
Standard time limit	Complaints should normally be made within 12 months of the incident
Late complaints	Will still be considered if there is a valid reason for the delay and if it is still possible to investigate fairly
Examples of valid reasons	Age, trauma, lack of capacity, ongoing safeguarding concerns

9. Escalation & Further Steps

If You Remain Unhappy

Step	Action
1	Request escalation to Stage 2 – Independent Investigation
2	Contact the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

- PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH
- Tel: 0300 061 0614
- Website: www.lgo.org.uk

The Ombudsman will usually only investigate after Richmond House has been given the opportunity to respond.

The LGSCO has launched a Joint Complaint Handling Code, implemented from 1 April 2026, which sets out standards for complaint handling.

Other Routes

- **Legal advice** – You may wish to seek independent legal advice
- **MP** – You can contact your local Member of Parliament
- **Children's Commissioner** – For concerns about children's rights



10. Regulation & Safeguarding Oversight

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Richmond House is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Regulation 16: Receiving and Acting on Complaints requires providers to have an effective and accessible system for identifying, receiving, recording, handling and responding to complaints. All complaints must be investigated thoroughly and any necessary action taken.

Note: CQC cannot investigate individual complaints, but welcomes information about concerns regarding services.

Regulation 20: Duty of Candour requires openness, formal written apologies, and full explanations whenever an incident results in harm or distress.

Contact CQC:

- Care Quality Commission – National Correspondence
- Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA
- Tel: 03000 616161
- Website: www.cqc.org.uk

Safeguarding

If a complaint raises safeguarding concerns, it will be referred to the Local Authority Safeguarding Children Team immediately.

Safeguarding referral pathway:

1. Complaint received
2. Initial assessment for safeguarding concerns
3. Immediate referral if concerns identified
4. Joint working with safeguarding team
5. Regular updates to complainant (if safe to do so)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (May 2025 update) includes new resources:

- An illustrated guide for children and families explaining safeguarding
- An animated video helping professionals communicate safeguarding concepts
- A practitioner toolkit to facilitate safeguarding discussions



These resources were co-produced with children and young people and aim to ensure safeguarding practices are transparent.

11. Staff Complaints (Grievance Procedure)

A separate Grievance Procedure applies to staff members. This ensures employees can raise workplace concerns, which will be addressed fairly, respectfully, and in line with employment law.

Process Includes

- **Informal resolution** – Discuss concerns with line manager
- **Mediation** – Independent third-party support
- **Formal grievance hearings** – Formal investigation and hearing
- **Appeal process** – Right to appeal any decision

12. Guiding Principles

Principle	What This Means
Openness and fairness	All complaints will be handled with honesty, fairness, and transparency
Duty of Candour	We will be open and transparent, providing full explanations and apologies where appropriate
Confidentiality	Complaints will be treated in confidence, except where disclosure is required to protect a child or vulnerable person
No victimisation	No service will be reduced or withdrawn as a result of making a complaint in good faith
Accessibility	The complaints procedure will be available in alternative formats or languages upon request
Children's rights	Children and young people will be supported to express concerns in ways that are meaningful to them
Timeliness	Complaints will be handled promptly and within agreed timescales
Learning	Complaints will be used to improve services
Accountability	We will be accountable for our actions and decisions



13. Accessibility & Support

Alternative Formats

The complaints procedure is available in:

- Large print
- Easy read
- Child-friendly, illustrated format (in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children resources)
- Braille (on request)
- Audio format
- Other languages (on request)

Please contact us to request an alternative format.

Communication Support

We can arrange:

- Interpreters (face-to-face or telephone)
- Sign language interpreters
- Advocacy support
- Support from a trusted adult

14. Record Keeping

Complaint Records

All complaints will be recorded and retained in accordance with our Records Retention Policy and CQC requirements.

Aspect	Detail
Recording	All complaints logged on central register
Retention	Records retained for 7 years after conclusion
Access	Complainants can request access under GDPR
Monitoring	Complaints reviewed quarterly by management
CQC reporting	Summary of complaints provided to CQC when requested within 28 days



Data Protection

All personal data will be processed in accordance with:

- **UK GDPR**
- **Data Protection Act 2018**

15. Learning & Quality Improvement

We are committed to learning from complaints to improve our services.

Learning Process

Step	Action
1	Complaints reviewed at monthly management meetings
2	Trends and themes identified
3	Action plans developed to address issues
4	Changes implemented and monitored
5	Feedback shared with staff and service users

Quality Improvement

Complaints contribute to our quality improvement cycle:

- **Annual service reviews**
- **Staff training needs analysis**
- **Policy and procedure updates**
- **Service user satisfaction surveys**

CQC evaluates how services manage complaints as a serious matter, assessing complaint management systems during inspections.



16. Complaint Acknowledgement Letter Template

Date: [Date]

Name: [Name]

Address: [Address]

Our ref: [Reference Number]

Re: Your complaint about [service/issue]

Dear [Name],

Thank you for bringing to our attention your concern regarding [brief description of complaint] on [date].

I am sorry that you are not happy with the services provided by Richmond House Social Care Services.

As I understand, your concerns are that:

- [Point 1]
- [Point 2]
- [Point 3]

Please contact me straight away if I have misunderstood any of your concerns.

What happens next:

1. Your complaint is being investigated by [Name], who is [Job Title].
2. We will provide you with regular updates, at least every 10 working days.
3. We aim to provide a full response by [date].

If you are not satisfied with our response:

You have the right to request escalation to **Stage 2 – Independent Investigation**.

Support available:

- If you would like independent advocacy support, please let us know.



- If you need this letter in another format (large print, easy read, another language, or child-friendly format), please contact us.

I would be happy to meet you to discuss the issue you have raised and our investigation procedures if that would be helpful.

Please do contact me again in the meantime if I can be of further assistance. My email and phone numbers are provided above.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Job Title]

[Contact Details]

17. Easy Read Summary

Making a Complaint – Easy Guide

What is a complaint?

A complaint is when you tell us you are unhappy about something.

You can complain about:

- How staff treat you
- The quality of your care
- How decisions are made
- Our policies

Who can complain?

- Children and young people
- Parents and carers
- Family members
- Advocates or representatives



How to complain:

- Speak to a member of staff
- Phone: 07484 371525
- Email: complaints@rhscs.org.uk
- Write to us
- Use our online form

What happens next (Stage 1):

1. We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 days
2. We will investigate your concerns
3. We will keep you updated
4. We will give you a full response within 28 days

What if I'm not happy with the response (Stage 2)?

You can ask for an Independent Investigation. This will be completed within 25 to 65 working days.

What if I'm still not happy?

You can contact the **Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman**.

Will I get in trouble for complaining?

No. We will not treat you differently because you have complained.

Can someone help me?

Yes. We can arrange advocacy support to help you.

18. Contact Information Quick Reference

Who	Contact
Make a complaint	complaints@rhscs.org.uk / 07484 371525
Suggestions	suggestion@rhscs.org.uk
Head of Services	jay@rhscs.org.uk / 07484 371525
Advocacy Support	NYAS: 0808 808 1001
Childline	0800 1111



LGSCO	0300 061 0614 / www.lgo.org.uk
CQC	03000 616161 / www.cqc.org.uk

19. Version Control

Version	Date	Changes	Author
V2.0	September 2026	Updated for 2026–2027 academic year: added Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, LGSCO Complaint Handling Code, two-stage process, Working Together 2025 resources, CQC Regulation 16 and 20	Hala Okasheh, Jay Al Karaki, Pauline Bullement

Next Review Date: September 2027

Review Responsibility: Registered Manager

Richmond House Social Care Services CIC is committed to continuous improvement and welcomes feedback on this procedure.



Richmond House

Complaints Guide for Children & Young People



Introduction

At Richmond House, we want you to feel safe, happy and listened to. If something is worrying you, or if you are unhappy about the care or support you get, you have the right to complain.



What Can You Complain About?

- The way staff talk to you or treat you.
- How your care or support is given.
- If something promised is not happening.
- If you feel left out or treated unfairly.
- If you don't feel safe.



How Can You Tell Us?

- Talk to any staff member you trust.
- Speak to the Manager or Deputy Manager.
- Write a note and put it in the Suggestion/Complaints Box.
- Call us on 01262 481518 / 07484 371525.
- Email us at hala@rhscs.org.uk.
- Ask an advocate (someone who helps you speak up) to complain for you.



Will It Be Private?

Yes. We keep your complaint private.

