

Working Families Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Working Families wants to achieve a society in which everyone can fully meet their work and caring responsibilities. This society allows real choice in balancing the interdependent demands of family, work and community at different life stages and so enables everyone to realise their full potential.

To achieve this, we:

Support employers to create and sustain successful flexible and family-friendly workplaces

Empower parents and carers to understand and use their workplace rights

Drive meaningful policy and legal changes to engender secure and flexible jobs as the norm, and advocate for a baseline of protection that delivers equality in the workplace

We help thousands of people every year. However, occasionally someone may feel we got things wrong. We need to be told so we can put things right.

If you have a comment or complaint about any aspect of the service we have provided you, firstly tell the person who's been dealing with you. We hope that in most cases, this will resolve the matter.

Or you can contact us on office@workingfamilies.org.uk. Misunderstandings can often be sorted out on an informal basis. If you feel the problem needs to be looked at and put on an official footing, you can follow our Complaints procedure set out below.

Our service users, customers, supporters, donors, volunteers, and members of the public have the right to raise concerns, objections or make complaints about the services and responses they receive from us. All concerns and complaints will be taken seriously, listened to carefully, investigated fully where necessary, and responded to with respect and courtesy. Your views are important to us and help to ensure our services are consistently meeting people's needs. If you are unhappy with any of our services, it is important to us that you let us know.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable service users and customers to

- comment on weaknesses
- let the Charity know about things that have gone wrong or caused concern
- make suggestions for improving our services
- improve the quality of services by taking notice of the views of people affected by the services, building on what is good and changing what needs improving
- ensure the Charity takes users' views seriously and investigates any problems identified
- protect the interests of individuals accessing the charity
- support our staff and enable them to deal with complaints fairly and consistently.

Making a suggestion

Often people feel more comfortable about suggesting improvements rather than complaining formally. Anyone may make a suggestion. First you should speak to your usual contact at Working Families.

Or you can send it to:

Chief Executive Officer, Working Families, c/o Buzzacott LLP, 130 Wood Street, London EC2V 6DL
ceo@workingfamilies.org.uk or jane.vanzyl@workingfamilies.org.uk
07715 651 505

OR:

Complete a feedback form on our website.

Making a formal complaint

If making a suggestion hasn't resolved the issue or if you feel the matter requires a formal complaint, then please follow the complaints procedure below. We aim to handle complaints quickly, effectively and in a fair and honest way. We take all complaints seriously and use valuable information from our investigations to help us improve the services we provide. We treat all complaints in confidence.

Working Families assures the public that it will not withdraw or reduce services because someone makes a complaint in good faith.

Who can complain?

Anyone affected by the way Working Families provides services (including fundraising) can make a complaint.

A representative may complain for the affected person if they:

- cannot make a complaint themselves, or
- have given written consent for the representative to act on their behalf

If you are not happy about making a complaint yourself and you do not know someone who can talk or write to us on your behalf, we will find someone from an independent organisation to act as an advocate for you.

How you can make a complaint

You can complain:

- in person
- by telephone
- through a member of our staff
- through an advocate or representative
- by letter
- by email

When someone complains orally, we will make a written record and provide a copy of it within 3 working days.

Anonymous complaints

We deal with anonymous complaints under the same procedure; however, it is better if you can provide contact details so we can tell you the outcome of our investigation.

Responsibility

Each Head of Team has overall responsibility for dealing with all complaints made about any service delivered within their area of responsibility.

We will provide as far as is reasonably practical any help you need to understand the complaints procedure; or advice on where you may get that help.

How we handle complaints

Each Working Families Head of Team will investigate the complaint and record it in a central register. Where the complaint is about a Working Families Head of Team, the CEO will investigate.

If you feel in some way unhappy about the service you have received from the Legal Advice Service, then please call or email us on the details above and ask to speak to a Head of Team or Manager. They will attempt to resolve the matter and will keep a record of the conversation. If the matter can be resolved immediately, they will try to do this. If not, they will explain what further steps will be taken.

We will acknowledge a complaint within 5 working days and give you the name and contact details of the person investigating it. We will keep you informed about the progress of the investigation. We aim to have all complaints finished within 28 working days unless we agree a different time scale with you. If we agree with your complaint your response will include our suggestions for how we can rectify the situation. If we disagree or are unable to rectify the situation we will explain why and describe the actions taken.

Working Families reserves the right to refuse to investigate unreasonable complaints.

When we have finished investigating, we will arrange to contact you to discuss the outcome, and write to you with:

- details of the findings;
- any action we have taken or plan to take; and
- our proposals to resolve your complaint.

Time limits

You should complain as soon as you can after the date on which the event occurred or came to your notice. If you complain more than twelve months later, we may not be able to investigate properly. But we shall also consider whether you had good reason for not making the complaint sooner and whether, despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

Further steps

At any stage during the process, if you are not happy with the way the charity is dealing with your complaint you can contact the Chief Executive Officer at:

Working Families, c/o Buzzacott LLP, 130 Wood Street, London EC2V 6DL

Formal Approach to the CEO

If you feel the complaint is unresolved it should be sent to the CEO. An acknowledgement will be made in writing, an investigation undertaken and in most circumstances a response will be formally made within 10 working days of receipt.

Please provide us with as much information as possible including:

- The reason for your complaint
- Where and when what you are complaining about happened
- The name/s of anyone involved
- What outcome you are hoping for
- Your contact details (name, address, daytime telephone number and/or email)

Review by the Board

If the complaint is still unresolved an appeal can be made in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Working Families at the Charity's offices c/o Buzzacott LLP, 130 Wood Street, London EC2V 6DL. One of the appropriate Board Committees will investigate, depending on the nature of the complaint.

The Committee will consider the complaint and may ask the person to meet with them. The complainant may request a personal hearing with the Committee and has the right to be supported or represented by a person of their choice.

The Committee will then seek the views and investigate the actions of the staff and volunteers of the charity and seek to obtain any other relevant information. They will try to reach a decision within 10 working days and notify parties accordingly. Where this proves impracticable, due to the complexity of the case or external factors such as a wait for a key piece of information, the Committee will issue an interim or final report within 28 working days.

Should the complainant or other interested party be dissatisfied with the decision of the Trustees, they can request an appeal. Such an appeal must be based either on the grounds that the procedure followed by the Trustees was incorrect or because new information has come to light. Should this be the case the complainant may be represented by a person of her or his own choice. A Complaints Committee will be convened to consider any further representations within 10 working days of such a request. The decision of the Complaints Committee will then be final, and the process concluded.

Those making a complaint or raising a concern will be given a copy of the Complaints Policy and helped in understanding, interpreting, or translating its effective use.

The Board of Trustees will receive a report of all complaints at least annually.

Negligence

If you believe that the advice that you were given by Working Families has cost you money then you should seek independent advice from elsewhere - a high street solicitor, Citizens Advice perhaps or a Law Centre. In those circumstances we would not deal with a complaint at the same time as we are dealing with a legal action.

Complaints about practising solicitors

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal approach to the CEO, you will be signposted to the Legal Ombudsman.

You can contact the Legal Ombudsman at:

Website: <https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Fundraising Regulator

We promise to be honest, fair, and open about our fundraising. The charity is a member of the Institute of Fundraising as well as being registered with the Fundraising Regulator. We fundraise in a responsible way. We take this very seriously. However, if you do not think we are meeting these high standards please inform us, we will always try to resolve your concerns through our complaints process. However, if we have not managed to address your complaint to your satisfaction you can contact the Fundraising Regulator.

We will work closely with the Fundraising Regulator to resolve any complaints that are raised with them.

You can contact the Fundraising Regulator at:

Tel: 0300 999 3407

Website: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/complaints>

Data Protection

Working Families uses personal information in accordance with our privacy policy. If you have a complaint about how we are handling your data, or if you would like to exercise any of your personal data rights under the GDPR regulation, please contact us.

If you make a request and are not satisfied with our response or believe that we are illegally processing your personal information, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Working Families is registered with the ICO.

You can contact the ICO at:

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint>

Charity Commission

Finally, Working Families is registered with and regulated by the Charity Commission.

You can contact the Charity Commission at:

Tel: 0300 066 9197

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>