

**Complaints Procedure**

**Original: September 2022**

**Updated: September 2024**

**Reviewed Annually**

The Complaints Procedure exists to enable those concerns of parents, carers and others that cannot be resolved through informal discussion to be investigated and, if possible, resolved.

The Complaints Procedure is not open to employees of Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC in respect of matters relating to their employment. Complaints made under this procedure may relate to any aspect of the provision’s services to children and families, or the behaviour of any member of staff.

**Making your concerns known**

We need to know if you are concerned about any aspect of the provision, especially in relation to your own child. We cannot deal with problems if you do not tell us about them. Complaints need to be considered, and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible. Our complaints procedure outlines the different stages of the process and what the expectations are at the end of each stage.

**Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

Your complaint or concern should be discussed with Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC leads. Most difficulties are resolved at this stage. If you are not able to come into the provision you can also put your concerns in writing or an online meeting can be arranged. It is anticipated that most issues can be resolved through a constructive dialogue and without recourse to formal procedures. However, if the issue is not resolved you should refer your concerns in writing to Laura Frain and Catherine Widdrington, co-heads of Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC.

**Stage 2 – Meeting with the Co-heads**

The Co-heads will meet with you to discuss your complaint, and will seek to resolve your concerns. You may bring a friend to accompany and support you at this and any subsequent meetings. If necessary, the Co-heads will undertake a further investigation and respond to your concerns in writing within 14 working days of the meeting. If the matter is complex, and this timescale cannot be met, you will be notified and kept informed of progress. Should you still be dissatisfied, you should move to stage 3 of our procedure, as described below.

**Stage 3 – Complaints Panel**

If you feel the Co-head’s response has not satisfactorily addressed your complaint, you can submit a written request for a formal hearing of your complaint by the Complaints Panel. The panel will comprise 3 people who have had no previous involvement in your complaint, and at least 2 of whom have no immediate connection to Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC. This panel will consider evidence submitted by you and by the provision. The panel will be convened within 15 working days of receipt of your complaint. The Chair of the panel will write to you outlining the findings and recommendation/s of the panel within 5 working days of the hearing. If the matter is complex, and this timescale cannot be met, you will be notified and kept informed of progress. If the complaint relates to a member of staff at the provision, that person will also be entitled to receive a copy of the complaint. A copy of the findings and recommendations from any complaint will be made available at the provision site. A written record will be kept in the provision of any/all complaints that have been made; whether and at what stage they were resolved; together with a record of any action the provision took as a result of the complaint (whether or not the complaint was upheld). All correspondence, statements and records relating to any complaints will be kept confidential but may be shared with Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC if, as a result of this, there is a need for an official inspection.

**Further Appeal**

The decision of the Complaints Panel is the final stage in the consideration of your complaint. However, there may be circumstances in which it would be appropriate for you to raise your concerns with Rochdale Council. You should seek advice from those bodies as to whether your complaint falls within their scope for consideration.

**Vexatious, Serial & Persistent or Unreasonable Complaints**

The Provision recognises the importance of the Complaints Procedure. We are also aware that on rare occasions complainants may seek to use the procedure to raise frivolous issues, may not engage with the process in a constructive way or may seek to re-open issues which have already been resolved. In these exceptional circumstances, the Co-heads will submit the details to the Complaints Panel and ask for a decision as to whether or not the complainant should be excluded from the complaints process or for direction on any conditions that may be attached to future complaints from that person.