

FFSA Complaints Policy and Procedure**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Families First St Andrews (FFSA) is committed to providing the best possible services to children their families and the community.
- 1.2 Should someone not be happy with the service they have received, the information they have received or the actions of someone representing FFSA; they have a right to address their concerns and for those concerns to be heard.
- 1.3 If an informal resolution cannot be reached then a person has the right to make a complaint.
- 1.4 FFSA will ensure that this complaints policy and procedure is accessible to staff, volunteers, stakeholders and service users. This information will be made available through the main office and via the website.
- 1.5 All staff and volunteers will be informed of this policy during their induction to ensure they can share this knowledge should the need arise.
- 1.6 The complaints procedure is not limited to the children and families (or their advocates) we work with, but could extend to external agencies acting in the interests of the children and families.
- 1.7 FFSA would encourage any complainant to raise the issue informally, in the first instance, perhaps with a member of staff they have most contact with, to see if the matter can be resolved quickly and effectively.
- 1.8 FFSA would encourage them to bring a friend or relative to support them in their discussions, if it would help.
- 1.9 If an informal discussion does not resolve the issue, a complaints form can be obtained from the FFSA offices, mailed out, or obtained electronically via the web site.
- 1.10 All completed forms should be returned to the address on the bottom of the form.
- 1.11 Alternatively a letter would be acceptable; please clearly indicate that the letter is in relation to a complaint.

2. Stage one review

- 2.1 The complaint will be acknowledged within five working days and FFSA manager will carry out a full investigation into the circumstances surrounding the complaint.
- 2.2 The target time for responding in full to a complaint is 20 working days.
- 2.3 Should the complaint be more complicated a delay may be unavoidable; this will be explained fully to the complainant.
- 2.4 If the complaint is upheld, FFSA will issue a full apology, and explain any further actions that have been taken to resolve the situation.
- 2.5 FFSA aim to achieve full resolution at the earliest possible stage.
- 2.6 The initial response will inform the complainant of their right to ask for a review should they not be satisfied with the outcome of stage one. Details of how to do this will be provided.
- 2.7 If the complaint is regarding FFSA Manager the complainant should go directly to stage two.



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3. Stage two review by a nominated representative of the Board of Trustees

- 3.1 This process is similar to stage one. The FFSA Trustee will follow the same procedure as at stage one.
- 3.2 FFSA trustee will check that the investigation, so far, has been carried out fully and properly.
- 3.3 FFSA trustee will check that the fundamental point of the complaint has been addressed and look at any outstanding issues raised by the complainant.

4. Stage three review under the direction of the Chairperson of the Board

- 4.1 Should the complainant feel the issue has not been fully resolved; a further request for a review will be conducted under the direction of the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- 4.2 The chairperson will ensure that the process has been carried out properly and will check that the fundamental issues have been investigated fully.
- 4.3 The chairperson will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days
- 4.4 The review will be sent out within 20 working days.
- 4.5 The review will provide a full response, which will contain sufficient information to show that the complaint has been fully investigated, with an apology if appropriate.
- 4.6 Information will be given for a further review, if needed.

5. Stage four review by an Independent Adjudicator

- 5.1 The complainant is entitled to go to an independent person when:
 - When all stages of FFSA complaints procedure have been exhausted
 - The complainant is not happy with the outcome.
- 5.2 This person is called an Independent Adjudicator; FFSA would recommend their Fife Council Link Officer.
- 5.3 A request for a stage four review should be made within one month of receiving the stage three review.
- 5.4 It will become more difficult to constructively resolve the issue if the gap between the original complaint and the review is too long.
- 5.5 Requests made outside of this period will be considered if there are extenuating circumstances.
- 5.6 The independent adjudicator will conduct a review of the investigation to ensure:
 - The investigation has been conducted in line with the stated procedure
 - The investigation has been handled fairly.
 - The adjudicator will not comment on the substance of a complaint.
- 5.7 Should the adjudicator find that the stated procedure was not followed or that the matter has not been handled fairly, the adjudicator will specify why and may give directions for further actions to be taken.
- 5.8 The decision of the Independent adjudicator is final.

APPENDIX A
Complaints Policy and Procedure
FFSA Complaints Flow Chart

Can the complaint be resolved informally?	
No	Yes
Stage 1 FFSA Manager	No further action required
Complaint acknowledged within 5 days; with a view to a full response within 20 days	
If the complaint is against the Manger go to stage 2	
Is the Complaint resolved?	
No	Yes
	No further action required
Stage 2 Representative of the Board	
Complaint acknowledged within 5 days; with a view to a full response within 20 days	
Is the Complaint resolved?	
No	Yes
	No further action required
Stage 3 Chairperson of the Board	
Complaint acknowledged within 5 days; with a view to a full response within 20 days	
Is the Complaint resolved?	
No	Yes
	No further action required
Stage 4 Final Process Independent Adjudicator	
Complaint acknowledged within 5 days; with a view to a full response within 20 days	
Adjudicator decision followed	FFSA decision upheld
FFSA decision disputed – FFSA to follow	No further action required

APPENDIX B**FFSA Complaints Policy and Procedure****FFSA Complaints Form****NAME:****DATE:****NAME OF PERSON TAKING THE COMPLAINT:****Address of complainant:****Telephone Number:****Email:****Name of Activity/Service/Person concerned:****Please detail the complaint:****Who have you spoken to about your complaint?****What do you think should be done to put things right?****Signed (Complainant)** _____**Date** _____**Signed (FFSA contact person)** _____**Date** _____**Please return to:**

The Manager (private and confidential)
Families First St Andrews
Rose Lane Centre
132 South Street
St Andrews
KY16 9EW

**or
email:**



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manager@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk