



With Kids

Complaints Process

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www.withkids.org.uk



With Kids Complaints Process

Introduction

With Kids aims to provide a high quality, accessible and reliable service. On the rare occasion that we fall short of our own high standards, you have the right to make a complaint. All complaints will be taken seriously and will be investigated fully.

Anyone can make a complaint, whether a service user, a student, a volunteer, or an external agency. If you need support or assistance, we can provide this (or you may choose someone else to help).

We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

Informal Action

You should first raise any concerns on an informal basis with a member of our staff, with a view to early and informal resolution. This approach is designed to resolve problems quickly and effectively, as part of the everyday approach to service improvement and working together.

Where informal resolution does not achieve a satisfactory resolution, you should make a formal complaint.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- the quality and standard of any service we provide
- the quality of our facilities and resources
- the quality and standards of academic services and personal support services available to you
- the quality and standards of administrative processes
- unfair treatment by a staff member or a student.

Your complaint may involve more than one of the With Kids services or be about someone working on our behalf.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service
- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- a request under freedom of information or data protection legislation
- things that are covered by MSc Play Therapy academic appeals, such as academic judgements and decisions
- an issue which is being, or has been, considered by a court or tribunal
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following an investigation.

If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for an independent review of the complaint. If you are a student of the MSc in Play Therapy, you can escalate your complaint to Queen Margaret University: [Complaints Procedure: A Guide for Students | Queen Margaret University \(qmu.ac.uk\)](#)

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

How to make a complaint

If you are unhappy with our services, you can talk about the problem with a member of staff or the manager of that service. Complaints can often be dealt with by an explanation or apology. We hope that this informal approach will be adequate in most situations.

Students can complain using the With Kids complaint process or the Queen Margaret University complaints process. Most complaints can be dealt with by With Kids, but if they involve procedural complaints then Queen Margaret University complaints processes may be followed. If unsure, talk to the MSc Course Director or the Chief Executive of With Kids.

What if a discussion does not solve my complaint?

If you are not satisfied with the informal approach, you can make a formal complaint to our Chief Executive Officer in any format e.g., by letter, email info@withkids.org.uk, telephone 0141 550 5770.

Please explain what or who you wish to complain about and include any other information you feel is relevant.

Please address any complaints to:

Chief Executive Officer

With Kids, 15 Annfield Place, Glasgow, G31 2XE.

When complaining, please tell us:

- your full name and contact details.
- as much as you can about the complaint.
- what has gone wrong; and
- what outcome you are seeking.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

What will happen once I make a formal complaint?

Stage one – frontline resolution

We aim to respond to complaints quickly (where possible when you first tell us about the issue). This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at stage 1 in five working days or less unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to stage 2. You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2 either:

- within six months of the event, you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain; or
- within two months of receiving your stage 1 response (if this is later).

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a stage 2 complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

Stage two – investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those where the complainant remains dissatisfied after stage 1; and those that clearly require investigation, and so are handled directly at this stage. If you do not wish your complaint to be handled at stage 1, you can ask us to handle it at stage 2 instead.

When using stage 2:

- we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days
- we will confirm our understanding of the complaint we will investigate and what outcome you are looking for
- we will try to resolve your complaint where we can (in some cases we may suggest using an alternative complaint resolution approach, such as mediation); and
- where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a full response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will tell you our revised timescales and keep you updated on progress.

If you are an MSc student, stage two could be handled by QMU.

Appeals process

If you are not happy with the outcome of the investigation, you may appeal to the Chair of With Kids Board of Trustees.

Phone: 0141 550 5770 (ask to leave a confidential message about complaints for the Chair of Trustees).

Email: info@withkids.org.uk

Post: Chair of With Kids Board of Trustees, c/o With Kids, 15 Annfield Place, Glasgow, G31 2XE.

An appeal panel will then be formed from With Kids Board of Trustees. You will be advised of their decision within 10 working days of the appeal meeting in writing by email or letter. The decision of the appeal panel will be final.

If you are a student of the MSc in Play Therapy, you should make your appeal to Queen Margaret University.

Phone: 0131 474 0000 (ask for complaints when prompted).

Email: complaints@qmu.ac.uk.

Post: Complaints, Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement, Queen Margaret University, Musselburgh, East Lothian, EH21 6UU

What if I am still dissatisfied?

After With Kids, Chair of Trustees or Queen Margaret University have given you their final decision, and you are still dissatisfied with the decision or the way your complaint was dealt with, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO are an independent organisation that investigates complaints. They are not an advocacy or support service (but there are other organisations who can help you with advocacy or support).

You can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint if:

- you have gone all the way through With Kids and/or (if you are a student on the MSc Play Therapy course) Queen Margaret University's complaints handling procedure
- it is less than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about; and
- the matter has not been (and is not being) considered in court.

The SPSO will ask you to complete a complaint form and provide a copy of our final response to your complaint. You can do this online at

www.spsso.org.uk/complain/form or call them on Freephone 0800 377 7330.

You may wish to get independent support or advocacy to help you progress your complaint.

The SPSO's contact details are:

SPSO, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS
(if you would like to visit in person, you must make an appointment first)

Their freepost address is FREEPOST SPSO
Freephone: 0800 377 7330
Online contact: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Please note: This complaints procedure does not affect your legal rights.