Complaints Procedure – Shares Lancashire Holiday Club & Haf

Complaints Procedure

SHARES Lancashire multi-sports and activities Holiday Club and HAF Provision

1. Purpose

SHARES Lancashire is committed to providing high-quality, safe, and inclusive Holiday Club and Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) provision. We recognise that from time-to-time concerns or complaints may arise and view these as an opportunity to improve our services.

This Complaints Procedure sets out a clear, fair, and transparent process for raising, handling, and resolving complaints in line with UK legislation and Lancashire County Council (LCC) HAF expectations.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to complaints made by:

- Parents and carers
- Children and young people (supported appropriately)
- Staff and volunteers
- Partner organisations and members of the public

It covers complaints relating to:

- Service delivery
- Staff conduct
- Safeguarding or welfare concerns
- Health and safety
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This procedure is informed by and complies with:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004 – duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Education Act 2002 – safeguarding responsibilities
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 – duty to ensure safe environments
- Equality Act 2010 – protection from discrimination
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR – handling of personal data
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Lancashire County Council HAF Framework and Provider Expectations

4. Principles

SHARES Lancashire will ensure that:

- Complaints are taken seriously and handled respectfully
- The process is accessible and easy to understand
- Complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly
- No complainant is treated unfairly or disadvantaged as a result of raising a complaint
- Confidentiality is maintained wherever possible

5. Safeguarding Concerns

If a complaint relates to the safety or welfare of a child:

- It will be treated as a safeguarding concern, not a general complaint
- The matter will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Procedures will follow SHARES Lancashire Safeguarding Policy
- Where required, referrals will be made to Children's Social Care or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Safeguarding concerns should be raised immediately and will not follow the standard complaints timescales.

6. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints should be raised as soon as possible and can be made:

- Verbally to a member of staff, HAF Manager, or Area Manager
- In writing via email or letter to SHARES Lancashire

Support will be offered to ensure complaints can be raised by children or individuals with additional needs.

7. Informal Resolution (Stage 1)

Where possible, complaints should first be resolved informally.

- The complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days
- The HAF Manager or designated senior staff member will attempt to resolve the issue promptly
- Many concerns can be resolved through discussion, clarification, or apology

If the complainant is satisfied, the matter will be recorded and closed.

8. Formal Complaint (Stage 2)

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, or the complainant requests escalation:

- The complaint should be submitted in writing
- It will be acknowledged within 5 working days
- An investigation will be carried out by the Area Manager or senior leader not directly involved
- Relevant information, statements, and records will be reviewed

A written response will be provided within 20 working days, outlining:

- Findings of the investigation
- Any actions taken or planned
- The outcome of the complaint

9. Escalation and External Review (Stage 3)

If the complainant remains dissatisfied:

- The complaint may be reviewed by a senior leader or Trustee/Director of SHARES Lancashire
- A final written response will be issued

Where appropriate, complainants may also contact:

- Lancashire County Council (HAF Team) regarding funded provision
- Local Authority Children's Services for safeguarding concerns

10. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled confidentially in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

11. Recording and Monitoring

SHARES Lancashire will:

- Keep a record of all complaints and outcomes
- Use complaint data to identify trends and improve services
- Share learning with staff where appropriate

12. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

SHARES Lancashire reserves the right to manage complaints that are persistent, abusive, or unreasonable, while still ensuring concerns are addressed fairly and lawfully.

13. Review of Procedure

This Complaints Procedure will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or LCC HAF guidance.

Next Review Date: 27th January 2027

Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the SHARES Lancashire Complaints Procedure.

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____