(8) Complaints and Concerns

It is the policy of Kent Shared Lives to respect each individual’s right to express a concern or complaint about Shared Lives, to respond to such concerns by investigating them fully, speedily and fairly and to take any necessary rectifying action. Shared Lives regards complaints positively and as an opportunity to review service provision. This policy relates to complaints made by a Shared Lives host, a placed adult or a person acting on behalf of the placed adult.

This policy will be made freely and openly available to all parties with an interest in Shared Lives.

1. Shared Lives will ensure that adults and their families and/or representatives and hosts are aware of and have a copy KCC’s information for expressing concerns and/or making a complaint and will provide a copy in an appropriate language and format.

2. Shared Lives will ensure that any complaint is fully investigated and will in the case of adults support them to express their views and/or make a complaint by facilitating access to the allocated social worker or placing social work team, local independent advocacy, interpreters or communication support workers where necessary.

3. Shared Lives will ensure that adults and hosts are aware that they may refer a complaint to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) at any stage of the procedure and be provided with information on how to refer a complaint to the Commission. The details of the regional CQC office is Care Quality Commission South East, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 4PA, Tel:03000 61 61 61, e-mail address enquiries.southeast@cqc.org.uk, website www.cqc.org.uk.

4. Shared Lives will treat all complaints confidentially and information relating to them will only be given to other parties on a ‘need to know’ basis and in accordance with the Shared Lives policy on confidentiality.

5. Shared Lives will act to protect the best interests of the adult and/or hosts at all stages of the investigation and procedure and will ensure adults and hosts have access to independent advice.

6. Where relevant and possible, Shared Lives will seek to resolve concerns/complaints at an informal level by discussion and negotiation with the parties and the appropriate representation involved.

7. Where the complaint relates to an employee of Shared Lives, the Shared Lives or organisation’s disciplinary and grievance procedure for members of staff will be implemented, if required.
8. Where a concern or complaint relates to suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect of an adult, Shared Lives will initiate the local policy and procedure for the safeguarding of adults.

9. Where a complaint is made and it cannot be resolved at an informal level, Shared Lives will:

9.1. clarify the nature of the complaint with the complainant, advise them of the timescale within which an investigation will take place and investigate the complaint thoroughly and fairly

9.2. inform any person complained about of the nature of the complaint and arrange a meeting with them and the Shared Lives manager within 7 days of receipt of the complaint to clarify any initial action to be taken and the timescale for the investigation

9.3. ensure that any Shared Lives host complained about has a source of impartial advice and support

9.4. on completion of the investigation and no later than 28 days following receipt of the initial complaint inform the complainant and any person complained about of any action that is to be taken and confirm this in writing.

10. Shared Lives will keep a record of all complaints received, detailing any investigation and actions taken and make this available to the CQC on request and at least annually

11. Where a complaint is made against an Shared Lives host the following additional measures will apply and Shared Lives will:

11.1 Where necessary, draw up an agreement for the host to undertake action to rectify any identified problems within an agreed timescale;

11.2 Monitor and support the host’s progress on the required action and unless achieved within the time-scale, present a report to the Shared Lives panel;

11.3 Ensure the host is aware of his/her right of appeal against any decision made by the independent panel against him/her and the procedure for making that appeal;

11.4 Ensure the host is aware of his/her right to complain about any aspect of the implementation of the complaints procedure that s/he feels has been unfair and the procedure for making that complaint

11.5 Ensure that throughout the investigation of a complaint against a host, it will continue to offer support to the host by:
a. Informing and advising the host and the adult and/or his/her representative of the processes of the investigation and approximate time-scales involved and

b. Continuing to provide contact with the host’s usual Shared Lives worker and where this is not appropriate, with a replacement neutral Shared Lives worker or appropriately identified external support worker.

12. Where a complaint is made against a host and following conclusion of the investigation, Shared Lives will hold an additional Shared Lives host review. The review report will be presented to the independent panel for information and any necessary action.

13. This policy will be subject to regular review.

Leaflet: Kent County Council – comments, complaints and compliments