

If you are still not satisfied you can contact the Registration Authority:

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Tel: 0300 123 4666
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Families for Children Trust is a registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in England. Registered Office: Higher Mill, Buckfast, Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 0EE.
Company Number: 04460558 • Charity Number: 1093131

Children and Young People

We also want to hear from you. You can ask for a copy of our Children's Guide to Adoption Support.

Or you can:

- speak to your social worker and/or their manager
- speak to the Deputy Chief Executive, Graham Pellew
- ask a friend, teacher or other person to talk to us on your behalf
- contact the Children's Commissioner, Maggie Atkinson at
The Office of the Children's Commissioner
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
LONDON SW1P 3BT
Tel. 020 7783 8330
Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Some other organisations which can help you share your views are:

VOICE
Freephone: 0800 800 5792
Email: info@voiceyp.org
Website: www.voiceyp.org

NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCACY SERVICE
Freephone: 0800 61 61 01
Email: help@nyas.net
Website: www.nyas.net

CHILDREN'S LEGAL CENTRE

Freephone: 0800 783 2187
Email: clc@essex.ac.uk
Website: www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Families for Children values all comments, which are received about the services we provide. The Board of Trustees reviews all comments made regularly so that action can be taken to ensure we maintain a high standard of service.

PHONE: 01364 645480 • EMAIL: info@familiesforchildren.org.uk •
WEBSITE: www.familiesforchildren.org.uk • POST: Families for Children, Higher Mill, Buckfast, Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 0EE

The Representations Officer for Families for Children is Mrs Caroline Davis.



Adoption today is challenging and rewarding

This leaflet tells you how to make **suggestions about our services** and how to make a **complaint**. Your views help us to make sure that we are giving the best service we can, and are important in letting us know where we may need to make changes.

We welcome the views of everyone who receives a service from the Agency, or who wishes to represent a view on behalf of someone else who is receiving a service. These can be expressed as:

Comments: For example if you have a concern, or an idea for improving our services.

Complaints*: About a service, or the way you have been treated.

Compliments: Praise for a particular service or a member of staff.

Whether you wish to share a comment, a complaint or a compliment you may choose to speak to your social worker first. Usually any concerns can be sorted out together at an early stage. Alternatively you can contact the Registered Manager of the Agency (the Deputy Chief Executive). You can share your views with us by telephone, letter, email or by asking to meet with us.

If your concern is about the Registered Manager then you should contact the Chief Executive, who is also the Agency's Representations Officer.

MISSION STATEMENT

Families for Children is an Adoption Agency and professional working partnership, previously a joint venture between two autonomous bodies, the Exeter Diocesan Board for Christian Care and Plymouth Diocesan Catholic Children's Society.

As a Christian organisation concerned with the welfare of children, parents and families, our attitudes and practices are shaped by Christian values and we therefore aim to uphold the importance of marriage, family life and the dignity of each individual.

We believe that the best place for children to grow up is within their family of origin. Where this is not possible, we will endeavour to find loving families for children who need them.

* Complaints may be made by children who may be adopted, their parents and guardians, persons wishing to adopt a child, adopted persons, their parents

We have a special commitment to place Christian children within Christian families. At the same time, the services we offer reflect the diverse society in which we live and seek to meet the needs of children from differing backgrounds and circumstances.

We aim to provide a service, which will meet the continuing needs of children, parents and families.

We take pride in the quality of our services and are always looking at ways to improve our work.

Please tell us what you think about us, whether you want to make a positive comment or complaint.

Your views are important and any suggestions or complaints that you do make will be taken seriously.

What is a complaint?

Making a complaint is about telling someone you are not satisfied. It may be about an unwelcome or a disputed decision or a problem that has not been sorted or resolved. It may also be about whether the availability of a service is good enough, whether it is appropriate or whether it was offered in the right way.

If your complaint is about something that is not the responsibility of Families for Children then we will help you to direct your complaint to the right person or organisation.

Time Limit for Complaints

The time limit for making a complaint is one year from the date on which you became aware of the problem. In some limited circumstances there may be flexibility to consider a complaint beyond this time limit.

THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Informal Complaints

If you are not happy about the service that we offer we hope that you will be able to tell the person who is working with you. The member of staff should then tell their Manager about your complaint and also explain how they have dealt with it. This helps us to make sure that the matter has been handled properly. We will keep a written record of your complaint because we need to have an overview of all concerns and complaints so that we can ensure we offer the best possible service.

If you feel that the person you are working with cannot help you with the matter, or if you are not happy with the answers they give, then you should contact the Deputy Chief Executive. If your complaint remains unresolved then you can contact the

Chief Executive who will seek to resolve the matter and respond to you within 10 days.

Formal Complaints

If you are not satisfied that the problem has been solved, you can ask for a further investigation and for your complaint to be looked at again.

All formal complaints must be made in writing to the Representations Officer, who is the Chief Executive and is separate from the day-to-day professional social work management of the Agency. The Representations Officer will confirm receipt of your written complaint and will need to make sure that the complaint is legitimate or valid and that it should be directed to Families for Children. This may involve talking to you or other people to gain the required information. When it is a legitimate or valid complaint the Representations Officer will let you know that and will appoint an Independent Person to investigate.

The Independent Person is someone who is not responsible for the service you are complaining about and is not employed by Families for Children. An Independent Person will look at all the circumstances that led to your complaint, may interview you and members of staff, may look at the records concerning the matter you are complaining about, and will then recommend how the complaint will be resolved. The Independent Person will aim to complete their investigation and to discuss the conclusion with the Representations Officer and with you within 28 days. You will then receive a copy of the conclusion in writing.

Sometimes investigations take longer than 28 days. If this happens we will tell you and let you know the outcome as soon as possible.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Investigation you should write to the Representations Officer within 28 days. Your complaint will then be considered by a Review Panel within the following 30 working days. The Panel will be made up of at least three people. Two of these may be senior members of Families for Children staff and the Panel will be chaired by a person who is independent of the Agency. However, this person will not be the same Independent Person who has already considered the complaint.

You will be invited to attend the Review Panel Meeting and bring a supporter with you if you wish. This may be a relative, friend or professional but may not be a solicitor or barrister acting in a professional capacity. You and your supporter may attend to present your concerns in a written statement to the Panel, or may wish to do so by speaking to the Panel.

After the Meeting the Panel will make recommendations to the Agency and you will be notified of these in writing. The Agency will re-consider its original decision taking into account the Panel's recommendations alongside the views of the Independent Person to decide what action should be taken.

The Chief Executive will notify you in writing within five working days of the final decision. Any changes or action, which it is decided should be taken, will be implemented as soon as possible after the final decision is made.