

Acorn Autism Specialists Ltd Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

At Acorn Autism Specialists, we are committed to providing high-quality services, including private autism assessments, to all of our clients. We value feedback from those we serve, as it helps us to continually improve the services we provide. This Complaints Procedure Policy outlines how we handle complaints in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

2. Purpose

This Complaints Policy outlines the process for addressing complaints raised by clients, parents, caregivers, or any other stakeholders in the course of receiving our private autism assessments. We are committed to providing high-quality services and to resolving any concerns or issues in a fair, transparent, and timely manner. This policy ensures that complaints are handled efficiently, consistently, and in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all complaints raised by clients, their families, or any individual who has received services from Acorn Autism Specialists. Complaints may relate to the quality of the service, communication, behaviour of staff, or any other aspect of our service.

4. Our Commitment to Clients

- We aim to resolve complaints promptly, fairly, and in a way that ensures the best possible outcome for all parties.
- We will acknowledge receipt of complaints within a specified timescale, investigate concerns thoroughly, and provide a written response.
- We value feedback and aim to learn from complaints to improve our services.

5. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints can be made in a variety of ways to ensure ease of access:

- By phone: Call our main phone line on 01376 402284
- By email: Send an email to info@acorn-autism.co.uk
- In writing: Write to us at Suite A, Bridgefoot Studios, Maldon Road, Kelvedon, CO5 9BE
- In person: Speak with a member of our staff at the location where services were provided.

We encourage individuals making a complaint to provide as much detail as possible, including:

- A description of the incident or issue.
- The date and time it occurred.
- Names of staff members involved (if known).
- Any supporting documentation or evidence.

6. Complaints Process

Our complaints procedure consists of two stages: Stage 1 (initial resolution) and Stage 2 (further review if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1).

Stage 1: Initial Complaint and Investigation

- **Step 1: Acknowledgment of Complaint**
- We will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days of receiving it.
- Acknowledgment will include a summary of the complaint, clarification of the issues, and details of the next steps.



- **Step 2: Investigation of Complaint**
- We will investigate the complaint to determine the facts and gather any necessary information from relevant staff, documentation, or other sources.
- The investigation will be completed within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.
- **Step 3: Response to Complaint**
- Once the investigation is complete, we will respond to the complainant in writing within 15 working days of receiving the complaint. This response will include:
 - An explanation of the investigation process.
 - The outcome of the investigation.
 - Any actions or improvements that will be made as a result of the complaint, if applicable.
 - Information about the next steps if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome (i.e., how to escalate the complaint to Stage 2).

Stage 2: Escalation and Further Review

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 or feels that the complaint has not been resolved appropriately, they can escalate the matter to Stage 2 for further review.

- **Step 1: Request for Escalation**
- The complainant must notify the company in writing of their dissatisfaction and request that the complaint be escalated to Stage 2.
- This must be done within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 1 response.
- **Step 2: Review of the Complaint**
- A senior manager/Director or an independent person not involved in the initial investigation will review the complaint and the outcome of the Stage 1 investigation.
- The review will include a thorough examination of all relevant documents, interviews with staff members, and a reassessment of the findings of the original investigation.
- The review will be completed within 10 working days of receiving the escalation request.
- **Step 3: Final Response**
- A final written response will be provided to the complainant within 15 working days of the request for escalation.
- This response will explain the outcome of the review, including any changes or actions that have been taken or will be taken in response to the complaint.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, they will be informed of their right to take the matter to an external body, such as Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), Care Quality Commission (CQC), or The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman for further consideration.

7. Handling Anonymous Complaints

We encourage individuals to provide their contact information when submitting complaints to ensure that we can address the matter directly. However, we will still consider anonymous complaints and investigate them where possible, depending on the nature of the concern and the available information.

8. Timeframes for Resolution

We are committed to resolving complaints in a timely manner. The standard timeframes for acknowledgment, investigation, and response are as follows:

- Acknowledgment of Complaint: Within 2 working days
- Investigation Completion: Within 10 working days
- Response to Complaint (Stage 1): Within 15 working days
- Escalation Request (Stage 2): Within 10 working days of Stage 1 response
- Review Completion (Stage 2): Within 10 working days of escalation
- Final Response (Stage 2): Within 15 working days of escalation request



9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled in accordance with our Data Protection Policy, ensuring confidentiality is maintained throughout the process. We will protect the identity of the complainant and any third parties involved, sharing information only when necessary and in line with data protection regulations.

10. Improvement and Learning

We value complaints as an opportunity to improve our services. Each complaint will be reviewed and used to identify areas for improvement. Where appropriate, we will make changes to our practices, policies, or training to prevent similar issues from arising in the future.

11. Final Resolution and External Complaints

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after the final response at Stage 2, they have the right to refer the matter to relevant regulatory bodies or independent adjudicators, such as:

- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC): For complaints about healthcare professionals.
- The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman: For unresolved complaints regarding healthcare services.
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC): For complaints related to the quality of healthcare services.

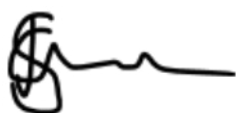
12. Monitoring and Review

We will regularly monitor and review complaints to ensure that we are meeting our commitments to transparency, fairness, and continuous improvement. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to relevant legislation, to ensure its ongoing effectiveness. By adhering to this Complaints Policy, we aim to provide a responsive and accountable service, ensuring that any concerns raised are heard, investigated thoroughly, and addressed to the satisfaction of those involved.

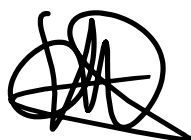
13. Conclusion

We take all complaints seriously, and we are committed to resolving issues quickly, effectively, and transparently. Our goal is to provide the highest standard of care and services, and we welcome feedback from our clients and clients to help us continually improve.

Signed:



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