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## Complaints Policy

We hope that you find the services offered by Sphere Autism Service to be of a high standard. However, should you have any concerns or wish to make a complaint<sup>(\*1)</sup> in the first instance, please speak or write to the member of staff concerned. Alternatively, please email the Complaints Lead.

Complaints Lead	Partner
Name: Mike Griffiths	Name: Alison Winterton
Email: support@sphereautismservice.co.uk	Email: support@sphereautismservice.co.uk
Tel: 07774638324	

This will trigger the complaints policy & processes as set out on Pages 2 and 3 of this document.

### Introduction

We believe that our Sphere Autism Service provides a quality service for all patrons, and that the staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents, young people and professionals. However, we are obliged to have procedures in place in case there is any reason for anyone to make a complaint. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

### Aims and Objectives

Sphere Autism Service aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved, using the 3-stage process detailed below.

### Social Media

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, we request the complainants do not discuss complaints publicly via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

(\*1) If your complaint/concern involves a safeguarding concern the complainant should refer to the Safeguarding and/or Whistleblowing policy.

# The Complaints Process

Sphere Autism Service operates a 3 phase complaints process:

**Phase 1:** An informal level whereby the complainant and the service work together to address the concerns raised. Sphere Autism Service will aim to respond to the informal complaint within 5 working days. Whilst in our care, we work very hard to ensure that each young person is happy with the service we provide. We want to know if anyone has experienced a problem at the earliest stage possible, so that we can take action to prevent the problem escalating and seriously affecting how the young person feels about the process, and to minimise the effect it may have on the outcome of an assessment/intervention. If any parent/guardian is concerned about anything to do with any aspect of their child's time whilst at Sphere Autism Service, we ask that they contact us as soon as possible so that they can discuss the matter with the appropriate individual. Most concerns can be dealt with relatively quickly and easily in this way.

**Phase 2:** Where resolution cannot be reached under Phase 1, the complainant makes a formal written complaint that is then investigated by the Complaints Lead and a written response is sent to the complainant within 10 working days. If a parent/guardian feels that their concern has not been resolved satisfactorily through contact with the appropriate member of staff, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature to bypass Phase 1, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Complaints Lead either in person or by telephone. The Complaints Lead will take any such complaint very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. The majority of complaints should normally be able to be resolved at this stage.

**Phase 3:** If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Phase 2 for any valid reason, they have the right to request a hearing before a panel of individuals. The reasons for requesting a panel hearing must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how Sphere Autism Service has handled it so far. The appeal should be addressed to Alison Winterton, Partner (see above) who will arrange for a panel of at least three people, who were not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, to hear the complaint and make their judgement.

The panel will endeavour to sit within 10 working days of the complaint being received from Alison Winterton and their response will be finalised within a further five working days. The panel will be comprised of three people, at least one of these people will be independent of the management and operation of the Sphere Autism Service. Any parent/guardian attending the panel hearing can be accompanied if they wish to be. The panel's findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and be available for inspection within seven working days of the panel hearing.

Sphere Autism Service has received no formal complaints within the last year (from date of review).