



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

## **Appendix 5 – Procedure for Handing Complaints from Parents and the Public**

The provider should ensure they have a complaints procedure in place that is published and accessible for parents who are not satisfied their child has received their free entitlement in the correct way, as set out in this agreement and in Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities

### **Background**

The Local Authority (LA) is responsible for registering settings who wish to be included in the Directory of Providers to claim Nursery Education Funding (NEF). It is necessary, therefore, for the LA to have in place a process for dealing with complaints about providers.

Please note, the way that maintained schools respond to complaints about the curriculum and admissions is already set out within a legislative framework.

### **Procedure**

#### **Stage 1**

Most concerns that parents may have about a setting registered with the LA to claim NEF for eligible two, three and four year olds will be dealt with on an informal basis with the provider concerned. Such concerns or complaints could be about the non-admission of a child, concerns about how the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage is being approached or indeed other issues concerned with the provider's eligibility to claim NEF.

The vast majority of parental concerns / complaints will, therefore, be dealt with by the provider through the complaints procedures in operation at that provider.

#### **Stage 2**

If, following consideration of the matter through all elements of the provider's complaints procedure, the complainant remains dissatisfied; the matter will be investigated by the Head of Early Help and Intervention. This will involve discussions with the provider and the complainant as necessary. Where the complaint is upheld, a remedy will need to be agreed. If a change by the provider is required they will be asked in writing to make the necessary changes within a specified period. Failure to make the changes could lead to exclusion from the Directory of Providers. The letter will also offer the right to appeal against the decision.

#### **Stage 3**

If the complainant or the provider is not satisfied with the action taken by the Head of Early Help and Intervention the matter will be referred to the Early Years Reference Group panel who will consider the evidence and respond within 28 working days. The provider and the complainant will be invited to present evidence to the panel in writing and may attend the meeting if they wish.

### **Monitoring**

Any complaints which have been received about providers on Bedford Borough Council's Directory, together with details of action taken will be reported to the Children Services Senior Leadership team.

### **Complaints about Local Authority funding process**

If a parent or provider is not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been dealt with by the local authority or believes the local authority has acted unreasonably, they can make a complaint to the Early Years Team and then the Head of Service.

### **Awareness Raising**

Providers are asked to advise parents of the availability of this procedure as requested