

Looking for help?  
Take The First Step and call:  
**0151 548 3333**



[www.thefirststep.org.uk](http://www.thefirststep.org.uk)

- The First Step Project
- Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocates (IDVSA)
- Women and Children's Refuge
- InPACT
- Integrated Partner Service

### Opening times

9.00 am to 4.30 pm - Monday to Friday

### National Domestic Violence Helpline

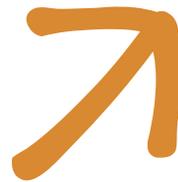
24 hour / 7days - 0808 2000 247

**The FIRST STEP**  
First Step Centre  
Peatwood Avenue  
Kirkby  
L32 7PR

Registered Charity Number: 1054533  
Limited Company Number: 3172572



Information



# CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS INFORMATION

If you have a  
concern or  
a complaint...  
talk to us

The   
**FIRST  
STEP** **TO FREEDOM FROM  
DOMESTIC ABUSE**

## We want to hear from you

At The First Step we aim to provide high quality, responsive services and welcome your feedback and suggestions on how we can improve them. We recognise that from time to time you may be unhappy about the services provided and may wish to complain. This leaflet tells you how to do this.

All complaints will be taken seriously and treated confidentially. You will not be treated unfairly for making a complaint.

## Concern or complaint?

It is important to establish the difference between a concern and a complaint. A concern can be dealt with informally, while a complaint takes a formal approach.

If you have any concerns about our work, please tell The First Step worker or their manager as soon as possible, so they can quickly understand your concerns, and try to put things right.

If you are not happy with the response to your concern and/or you want to make a formal complaint, please follow the procedure below.

## What can you complain about?

You can complain about any aspect of a service that you have received or requested from us and which you are unhappy about.

## Who can complain?

Anyone who receives or requests a service from us, or people who act on their behalf, can use the complaints procedure. This includes:

- People receiving our service
- Agencies/organisations referring in to our services
- Stakeholders

## What should I do to complain?

The complaint should be written down, or if you prefer you can tell someone at The First Step, or you can tell someone else who will write it down for you. You will need to sign it. A complaint form is available for you to use which you can get by asking a member of staff or by ringing us on 0151 548 3333 and we will send one out to you in the post.

We also have 'Suggestion Boxes' in the First Step Centre and Ross House, but you need to tell someone you have put it in there.

## What should I say in my complaint?

You should say exactly what the problem is, in your own words, and how you would like to see it resolved.

## What happens next?

### Stage 1 - The Complaint

#### Who deals with it?

A Service Leader

#### Acknowledgement:

5 Working days

#### Target for Response:

See stage 2

### Stage 2 - The Investigation

#### Who deals with it?

A Service Leader

#### Acknowledgement:

5 Working days

#### Target for Response:

20 working days



## What if I am not happy with the final outcome?

### The Appeal

#### Who deals with it?

Chief Executive Officer / Trustees

#### Acknowledgement:

5 Working days

#### Target for Response:

20 working days

We will try to respond to your complaint within the target times shown above. However, some issues may take longer to investigate. We will tell you if it's going to take longer to respond.

### Confidentiality

As far as possible, all complaints will be treated confidentially. However, it may not be possible to investigate a complaint fully or resolve it without sharing information. If you withhold agreement it may make it more difficult for us to take action to resolve the problem.

After you have been through the appeal process and are not satisfied with the result, there is no further right of appeal with The First Step but you could approach an external agency, such as:

- Solicitor
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

This should be done within one month of receiving the result of the appeal process. The longer a complaint is left, the harder it is to reach a satisfactory conclusion

## Can I change my mind?

**Yes.**

The First Step believes that you should be able to make a complaint if you wish. You will not be discouraged from complaining, not treated less favourably because you have made a complaint. If at any stage you decide you don't want to go ahead with a complaint you should contact the Service Leader or Chief Executive to tell them you wish to withdraw. If you are unsure of who to talk to, staff will be happy to help.

## How do I get a copy of your Complaints Policy and Procedure?

The First Step has a Complaints Policy and Procedure which you are entitled to have a copy of.

You can get a copy by asking a member of staff, ringing our main office on 0151 548 3333 or downloading it from our website at:  
[www.thefirststep.org.uk](http://www.thefirststep.org.uk)

