

## **COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS and COMPLAINTS: A GUIDE FOR SERVICE USERS**

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IAC – The Centre for Adoption provides a range of services on matters relating to intercountry adoption. These include:

- Advice and information by phone, letter and email
- Producing publications
- Providing information, preparation and training courses to prospective intercountry adopters, experienced adopters, and to their family and friends
- Undertaking assessments of prospective intercountry adopters
- Supporting prospective adopter(s) through Special Programs
- Providing training and education to professionals
- Signposting adoptees and birth relatives to Intermediary services where there have been an international component to the adoption

IAC is committed to ensuring high standards of conduct and performance in all aspects of its work and IAC staff aim to provide a professional service within the constraints of their time and budget.

Your feedback is very important to us and we are keen to know what you think about the services and the way in which we deliver them. Compliments highlight areas of good practice and acknowledge the commitment and hard work of our staff. Equally comments and complaints help IAC to reflect upon service delivery and improve aspects which are not working as effectively as you or we would hope.

This booklet sets out the different ways you can provide feedback to IAC.

## Who to contact at IAC

If you have comments or compliments and would like to inform a member of staff then you may either:

- Contact the person who delivered the service directly
- Contact their Manager

Chief Executive (all services)	Gill Haworth
Operations Director (all services)	Irene Levine
Adoption Managers (Intercountry)	Catherine Bunch Debbie Biss
Adoption Manager (Domestic)	Tamarka Egan
Adoption Manager (Post Approval Intercountry)	Tanya Gutter
Practice Manager – Subscriber Services	Julie Liebling
Development & Special Projects Manager	Jan Way
Practice Manager - Post Approval & Linking	Tatiana Rubinstein

## Raising concerns about the quality of the service received from IAC

If you have not been satisfied in any way with the services provided by IAC or a member of staff, there are a number of ways in which you can provide feedback.

If you have a concern we would, if possible, ask you to raise the matter directly with the person concerned or their manager (see list above), in the first instance. It is our aim to resolve concerns and complaints quickly and effectively and to endeavor to put right areas where we have performed below par.

If after raising your concern you remain dissatisfied please see the more formal Complaints Procedure below.

## **Procedure for formal complaints**

The following procedure for handling complaints has been adopted by the IAC Board of Trustees:

We would prefer you to write to us if you have a complaint against the service, either by email or surface mail. However IAC's policy also provides for complaints to be handled by telephone or in person, recognising that people have different preferences for dealing with such matters.

### **Stage One**

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of IAC's services, please write in the first instance to the relevant Manager or the Operations Director at IAC registered address detailing your complaint.

If you are writing please mark the correspondence confidential.

If you are making a verbal complaint (by telephone or in person) we will try to resolve the matter immediately, although this may not always be possible; if this is the case, the procedure below will be followed.

The matter will be investigated by the Manager and the Operations Director and a report produced within 14 days. We will write to you and tell you of any action we propose to take in response to your complaint, or our reasons for not taking any further action within 21 days.

Where a complaint against a member of staff is upheld the Manager will discuss appropriate action with the employee and if necessary disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with IAC's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

The Chief Executive and the Chair of the Board of Trustees will be notified of the complaint and outcome.

### **Stage Two**

If you feel you have not had a satisfactory response from IAC staff, or if your complaint concerns the Operations Director herself, you are invited to write to the Chief Executive to explain your position.

Letters should be marked confidential and addressed to:

Chief Executive  
IAC – The Centre for Adoption  
22 Union Street  
Barnet  
Herts EN5 4HZ

On receipt the Chief Executive will investigate the complaint and make a written report within 21 days. The Chief Executive will write to you and tell you of any action we propose to take in response to your complaint, or our reasons for not taking any further action within 28 days. The decision is final and no further correspondence will be entered into.

Where a complaint is upheld the Chair and Trustees will agree appropriate action with the employee and if necessary disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with IAC's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

A report of the investigation and outcome will be made to next Trustee's meeting.

## Stage Three

If you have taken all the above steps and still feel you have had an unsatisfactory response from the Chief Executive or if your complaint concerns the Chief Executive herself, you are invited to the Chair of the Board of Trustees to explain your position.

Letters should be marked confidential and address to:

Chair of Trustees  
IAC – The Centre for Adoption  
22 Union Street  
Barnet  
Herts EN5 4HZ

## Complaints about IAC's Charity status or Registration as a Voluntary Adoption Agency

Whilst it is important that you give IAC Management and the Board of Trustees the opportunity to resolve complaints internally, you are not required to have gone through the first three stages before going externally. Although depending on the gravity of the issue raised they may ask the Agency for information about how we have tried to resolve the issue or refer it back to us to try to do so.

However, if you feel that you have reason to complain about IAC as a Charity or regulatory body and/or your complaint has not been resolved by the Board of Trustees you may wish to contact an external agency which is involved in regulating IAC's services.

If you feel that you have reason to complain about IAC as a Charity you can contact the Charity Commission as a regulator for charities in England and Wales:

Operational Manager  
Charity Commission  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Queens Dock  
Liverpool  
L3 4DQ

IAC is a registered Voluntary Adoption Agency if your complaint is in relation to professional services then you may wish to contact Ofsted:

The National Complaints Team  
Ofsted National Business Unit  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Tel: 0300 123 4666 (helpline)  
Tel: 0161 618 8524 for textphone/Minicom users.

Certain complaints may fall within the remit of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and you may wish to contact that office for advice.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

**0300 061 0614**

<http://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/how-to-complain>