Outcomes First Group

Data Protection Complaint Procedure

Document Control

Owner:	**Data Protection Officer (DPO)**
Approved By:	**UK Executive Team**
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1. Introduction

This procedure applies to data protection complaints only.

If your complaint is about a school, please raise it directly with the school.

If you are a staff member with a complaint about a colleague, please speak to your line manager, People Services or our confidential helpline, Safecall.

2. Purpose

Outcomes First Group is committed to handling personal information lawfully, fairly and securely. We recognise that parents, guardians, staff and others need confidence that their information is treated with care and in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and other applicable privacy laws.

This procedure explains how individuals can raise a concern or make a complaint about the way Outcomes First Group collects, uses, shares, stores, secures or otherwise handles personal information.

We aim to deal with concerns promptly, fairly and transparently, and to keep individuals informed throughout the process wherever possible.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to complaints about personal information processed by Outcomes First Group. Concerns may be raised by, or on behalf of:

- Pupils and students
- Parents and carers
- Employees
- Job applicants
- Contractors
- Suppliers
- Visitors
- Service users
- Members of the public

The procedure covers concerns regarding:

- Unauthorised access to personal information
- Inaccurate personal data
- Excessive collection of personal information
- Failure to respond to information rights requests
- Improper disclosure of personal information
- Data security breaches
- Unlawful processing of personal information
- Retention of personal information beyond required periods
- Failure to comply with privacy notices
- Any other issue relating to UK GDPR or data protection legislation

4. Principles

Outcomes First Group is committed to ensuring that:

- Concerns and complaints are handled promptly, professionally and with sensitivity
- Individuals are listened to and treated fairly and respectfully
- Complaints are considered impartially and in line with legal and organisational requirements
- Confidentiality is respected and information is only shared where necessary
- No one is disadvantaged for raising a concern in good faith
- Appropriate action is taken where issues or failures are identified
- Lessons learned are used to strengthen practice and improve how personal information is managed.

5. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints may be submitted in writing by:

Email

Data Protection Officer - Email: data.protection@ofgl.co.uk

Post

Data Protection Officer
Outcomes First Group
Atria
Spa Road
Bolton
BL1 4AG

Alternative Formats

Where needed, concerns or complaints can also be raised verbally or in another format to support accessibility or communication needs.

To help us investigate the matter as quickly as possible, individuals should provide, where available:

- Name and contact details
- Description of the concern
- Relevant dates
- Any supporting evidence
- Details of the outcome sought
- Consent or another lawful basis if the complaint is on behalf of a third party
- Anonymous complaints may be considered where sufficient information is available to investigate.

6. Complaint Handling Process

Stage 1 – Receipt and Acknowledgement

When a complaint is received:

- The complaint will be logged into the Data Protection Complaints Register.
- An acknowledgement will normally be sent within 30 calendar days upon receipt of the complaint, unless the matter has already been resolved and a final response has been issued within that time.

• A reference number will be assigned.
• The complainant will be told what will happen next and, where possible, the expected timescales for handling the matter.

Stage 2 – Assessment

The Data Protection Officer will consider:

• The nature of the complaint
• Any immediate risks to individuals
• Whether a personal data breach may have occurred
• Whether urgent remedial action is required
• Whether specialist advice is necessary
• Where appropriate, immediate measures may be implemented to reduce risk.

Stage 3 – Investigation

The investigation may involve:

• Reviewing relevant records and systems
• Examining policies and procedures
• Interviewing relevant staff
• Assessing compliance with UK GDPR requirements
• Reviewing security controls
• Obtaining additional information from the complainant
• All staff are expected to cooperate fully with investigations.

Stage 4 – Outcome

Following the investigation, Outcomes First Group will provide a written response setting out:

• Findings of the investigation
• Whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld
• Any corrective actions taken or proposed
• Any lessons learned or service improvements identified
• Information about escalation rights

Where appropriate, corrective actions may include:

- Correction or deletion of data
- Restriction of processing
- Additional staff training
- Policy changes
- Security improvements
- Disciplinary action where appropriate

7. Timescales

Outcomes First Group aims to:

- Acknowledge a complaint within 30 calendar days, unless the complaint has already been resolved and a final response issued within that period.

- Investigate the matter and provide an outcome without undue delay. As Outcomes First Group provides education services, there may occasionally be reasonable delays during school holiday periods. If this affects a complaint, the complainant will be informed.

Where investigations are complex and additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of:

- The reason for the delay
- Revised timescales
- Progress updates

8. Data Breach Complaints

If a complaint indicates a possible personal data breach:

- The matter will be assessed immediately.
- The organisation's Personal Data Breach Procedure will be activated where appropriate.
- Risks to affected individuals will be evaluated.
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) will be notified where required by law.
- Affected individuals will be informed where legally required.

9. Escalation and Review

If a complainant is unhappy with the outcome, they may ask for an internal review by writing to the Data Protection Officer and explaining why they remain dissatisfied.

Internal Review

Requests for review should be submitted within 20 working days of receiving the outcome.

A final response to the review will normally be issued within 20 working days, unless there is a justifiable reason for delay, for example the availability of relevant staff during school holidays.

10. Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Individuals also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if they believe their personal information has been handled unlawfully.

Contact details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 0303 123 1113
Website: https://ico.org.uk

Outcomes First Group encourages individuals to raise concerns with the organisation first so that we can review and, where appropriate, resolve the matter. However, this is not a requirement, although the ICO may ask whether the concern has first been raised with us.

11. Record Keeping

The Data Protection Officer will maintain a secure register of:

- Complaints received
- Investigation actions
- Outcomes
- Corrective measures
- Lessons learned
- Review decisions
- Records will be retained in accordance with the organisation's Retention Schedule.

12. Monitoring and Reporting

The Data Protection Officer will:

- Monitor complaint trends
- Report significant issues to senior management
- Identify recurring themes
- Recommend improvements to policies and practices
- Support organisational compliance monitoring

13. Responsibilities

Data Protection Officer responsible for:

- Managing complaints
- Conducting investigations
- Providing advice and guidance
- Maintaining records
- Liaising with regulators where required

Managers responsible for:

- Supporting investigations
- Implementing corrective actions
- Promoting compliance within their teams

Employees responsible for:

- Cooperating with investigations
- Reporting concerns promptly
- Following data protection policies and procedures

14. Related Documents

- Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Notice
- Personal Data Breach Procedure
- Information Security Policy
- Retention Schedule
- Subject Access Request Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct

15. Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- Legislation changes
- Regulatory guidance changes
- Significant incidents occur
- Organisational changes require revision

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