

Adoption Support Fund Delivery Partner Complaints Procedures

This document sets out the purpose of the Adoption Support Fund (ASF), the role of Mott MacDonald (MM) as the delivery partner on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE) and an outline of the different types of complaints and their respective procedures and processes.

The Purpose of ASF

The ASF provides funding to local authorities (LAs) and regional adoption agencies (RAAs) to pay for essential therapeutic services for eligible adoptive and special guardianship order (SGO) families. The ASF model is based on the existing statutory framework for the assessment of adoption support or SGO support needs and the provision of support services by RAAs and LAs.

For more information on support available to families, please visit:

- [First4Adoption](#) and [Adoption UK](#) for adoptive families
- [Family Rights Group](#) for SGO families

Role of the ASF Delivery Partner

The role of the delivery partner is to assess applications made to the Fund against the scope and eligibility criteria set by the DfE to determine if the identified package of support can be funded or part funded by the ASF.

About ASF Complaints

We define a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about the service provided by the delivery partner which is not resolved by the operational team as part of normal business.

You can raise a complaint about any aspect of the service you've received from the ASF delivery partner, including:

- mistakes you believe have been made
- unreasonable delays which exceed the published processing times
- how you've been treated
- not being kept informed

We will not investigate complaints:

- about government policy (including the scope and eligibility criteria of the ASF) or legislation
- that have already been investigated or are currently being investigated by the LA or RAA local complaints procedure or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- the way your claim has been handled, or the decisions that have been made by your LA/RAA
- that are, or have been, subject to legal proceedings, including legal settlements

How to complain about service from the ASF delivery partner

If you would like to complain about any aspect of the service that you've received from the ASF delivery partner, please let the team know as soon as possible. We will do our best to put things right.

You can contact us by phone or in writing. When you contact us please provide us with as much detail as you can to help us investigate your complaint, please confirm:

- the LA/RAA concerned
- your name including contact details
- where known, the reference number of the application you are complaining about
- what happened, when it happened and the impact
- if you are a parent or carer you will need to provide permission for us to contact the relevant LA/RAA so that we can identify your child's application
- what you want to happen to put things right.

If your complaint relates to the detail of a specific claim, we will not be able to investigate further if you don't supply the information that is required to identify the claim. Please note that all applications are anonymised so we cannot search for a case using child's name, address or date of birth.

Who to contact

Please use the contact details for the ASF operational support team:

Telephone: 01223 463517
Email: asf@mottmac.com
Postal Address: Adoption Support Fund
22 Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2JD

What happens next

The delivery partner will conduct an initial review of the complaint received, determine the complaint type and follow the procedures set out below.

If we have made a mistake, we will put it right as soon as possible and apologise immediately. We will always acknowledge where things could have been done better and tell you what we will do to avoid the same thing happening again. Equally if we don't agree with your complaint, we will let you know why.

If you are not satisfied with our initial response, or we need to investigate further, we will escalate your complaint to a fund manager to review.

Complaint Types and Procedures

Complaints from parents/carers about the way in which LA/RAAs have accessed the Fund

It is beyond the remit of the delivery partner to respond to complaints about the approach your LA/RAA take to the local commissioning of services.

If you need to complain about the way your LA/RAA has handled your application you should approach the LA/RAA directly and follow their complaints procedure to resolve your issues.

If you have followed the LA/RAA complaints procedures and this has concluded, but you do not feel the issue has been resolved, you may wish to consider raising your concerns to the Local Government Ombudsman – see [How to Complain – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#).

Complaints from parents/carers about the way ASF applications have been processed

Your LA/RAA is responsible for the assessment of adoption support or SGO support needs and the provision of any services. The LA/RAA have to ensure that any application to the ASF meets the scope and criteria of the fund. If you have any concerns regarding the operational processing of an ASF application, please contact your LA/RAA in the first instance. If the LA/RAA are unable to resolve your concerns, they can contact the ASF delivery partner directly on your behalf.

Complaints from LA/RAAs

1. The complaint will be logged, and an acknowledgement will be issued to the complainant within two working days.
2. Due to data protection reasons, all the applications submitted to ASF are anonymous and don't include any identifying information. We will ask for some basic information about the child/young person (such as date of birth, gender) and ASF application reference number if applicable so that we can investigate your complaint further.
3. Once all the information has been received, the complaint will be escalated to MM Fund Managers to assess its type and will follow one of two routes, outlined below:

Scope of and Eligibility for the ASF

If your complaint is about the scope of or eligibility for the ASF, it will be escalated to DfE to review and respond.

Operational Management

If your complaint is about the operational management of the ASF, a Fund Manager will initiate an investigation.

A dedicated member of our team will contact you to explain how the complaint will be investigated. The investigation will normally be completed within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint. In exceptional circumstances (for example, where the issues involved are particularly complex and/or the relevant personnel are not readily available for reasons beyond our control), it may be

necessary to extend the period of the investigation. Where this proves necessary, the complainant will be kept fully informed of progress.

What to do if you aren't satisfied

When we have concluded our investigation into your complaint we will issue a full reply. This will also include details of who you can contact next if you think we haven't dealt with it properly. This will normally be an appropriate senior member of the management team and a senior DfE official. Any appeal must be raised within 3 months of receiving our final response.

This is the final stage of review for any complaint relating to the operational management of the ASF. We are not able to look at matters relating to government policy, including the scope of and eligibility for the ASF. If this is the nature of your complaint you can contact the government department responsible for that policy, or alternatively you can [contact your local MP](#).

The review will look at what happened and what we did about it. If they think we should have done more, they will ask us to put matters right and will act as an impartial referee.

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