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**Longford County Childcare Committee**

**Customer Charter**

**Introduction**

LONGFORD CCC is fully committed to providing a professional, efficient, courteous, quality service to all our customers. CCCs play a vital role in the local delivery of the national early education and childcare programmes and contribute to the implementation of Government policy. The staff of the LONGFORD CCC seeks to assist and support all customers in relation to early childhood care and education and school age childcare. Our aim is to promote a service always acting with diligence, efficiency and courtesy and equality of treatment to everyone we deal with.

**OUR SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS (Our clients: Community and Private Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare Services, Parent & Toddler Groups, Childminders, Parents, General Members of the Public, Statutory bodies, other local groups, Pobal and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and any other agencies we come in contact with.**

**Our Commitments**

Customer satisfaction is very important to us

We aim to achieve this by:-

* Giving our customers the best possible service and advice
* Treating our customers in a proper, fair, impartial and courteous manner
* Aiming to ensure that rights to equal treatment set out by equality legislation are upheld in the delivery of our services
* Aiming, where possible, to meet any special needs our customers may have.

**Enquiries and Information**

* LONGFORD CCC will deal with enquiries with courtesy, sensitivity and minimum delay, giving contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions. LONGFORD CCC will endeavor to ensure that the information it provides - in person, by phone, e-mail, print or web - is clear, up-to-date and accurate.

If you:

* Visit CCC office - we will treat you in a polite, courteous and fair manner. We will ensure that your privacy is respected and that all matters will be dealt with confidentially.
* Contact by Phone - we will be available to answer your calls during normal office hours (9am-5pm) Monday to Friday. We will endeavour to answer or return calls promptly and in a polite and professional manner, by identifying ourselves and the name of the company to customers with telephone queries and will ensure confidentiality in addressing all calls. We will ensure that if for any reason we cannot deal with a phone query promptly, we will return customer calls as soon as possible. When voicemail is in use, we will ensure that customers leaving messages receive a call back within one working day at the very latest. Callers to voicemail will be made aware if the person they are calling will be away for more than one day, and will be provided with an alternative contact number.
* Correspondence by Letter or Email - If our customers write to us or email us, we will acknowledge receipt of any communications within 3 working days. We will ensure that a substantive reply to our customers will follow within 15 days working days of initial receipt. We will also inform customers that complex queries may take a longer period of time to resolve. We will also provide our customers with a name, phone number and or email address for the person who will be dealing with a particular query and will endeavour to act upon all queries when individual staff members are absent from the office for any reason.
* In providing our services through our website, we will ensure that our website offers information to suit our customer’s needs and that information on our website is up-to-date and accessible to all customers.

**Providing Information**

We will ensure that all available information is accessible in electronic format. We will provide accurate information, using clear and simple language that is relevant to the enquiry. We will supply prospective grant applicants with grant guidelines and criteria and offer support to explain what is required for the application, provide deadline details and ask only relevant questions.

**Queries**

Staff will ensure your query is handled in a professional and efficient manner.

Please note Complaints are defined into two key areas:

* Complaints in relation to LONGFORD CCC *(CCC Complaints Policy & Procedure)*
* Complaint in relation to the Early Years Sector.

CCC Staff will manage the different types of complaints that are received into the CCC office and direct customer to the appropriate agency (ie Pobal, DCYA, TUSLA).

**Courtesy**

LONGFORD CCC will approach all our interactions with you in a professional manner, promoting an environment of courtesy, sensitivity and mutual respect.

**Transparency**

LONGFORD CCC is committed to transparency in all of its decision-making processes and will deal with customers in a conscientious and honest manner ensuring impartiality at all levels.

**Co-ordination**

LONGFORD CCC commits to linking and co-ordinating in a flexible manner with other structures/agencies at national/regional/local level as appropriate to help advance better co-ordination of the types of services that we deliver.

**Official Languages**

LONGFORD CCC will make every effort to accommodate our customers who wish to conduct their business

through the medium of Irish.

**Feedback from you**

LONGFORD CCC will welcome and take on board as appropriate any feedback you may provide to help us to continuously improve our service delivery and in our role of identifying good practice for others. To give us feedback on any of our services or a specific service provided to you, please call us on 043 33 42505 or email us at [enquiries@longfordchildcare.ie](mailto:enquiries@longfordchildcare.ie).

**Investigations and Complaints**

**Complaints**

You have a right to complain if the standard of service you have received is not on par with that set out in this Customer Charter (Refer to CCC Complaints Procedure).

**Access**

LONGFORD CCC will endeavour to meet and communicate with our customers in an accessible manner.

**Equality/Diversity**

LONGFORD CCC will ensure full adherence to the right to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and will accommodate diversity, in line with the areas covered by existing and future legislation.

**Data Protection**

LONGFORD CCC values an individual’s rights and freedoms in respect of privacy and fully complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

**Customers with disabilities**

LONGFORD CCC will make every effort to ensure that access to all areas of our premises and to all of our services is available for people with disabilities.

**Websites and publications**

We will provide an accessible, informative and usable website. We will ensure that our publications are clear and concise, address the user needs and are available to download from our website. We prioritise communicating with the Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare services, Childminders and parents in County LONGFORDX on a regular basis by telephone, email and social media to ensure they are informed on all DCYA programmes, developments, resources and supports, and training/events in the sector.

**Procurement**

We will comply with:

* Relevant EU and national legislation, related regulations, departmental guidelines, circulars and codes of practice relevant to procurement activities
* Our statutory obligations under the Prompt Payment of Accounts legislation

**What we expect from you**

LONGFORD CCC aim to provide a quality service for our service users and stakeholders that will be delivered by LONGFORD CCC staff in a considerate, courteous and helpful manner. In return, we expect our staff to be treated with courtesy and respect.

**How to Contact Us**

ADDRESS Longford County Childcare Committee

Richmond Street

Longford N39 YY75

Telephone:- 043 33 42505

Email:- enquiries@longfordchildcare.ie

**LONGFORD City/County Childcare Committee CLG**

**Complaints Procedure on CCC Service**

LONGFORD CCC welcomes valid complaints particularly if they are likely to result in improved services to our customers.

**Q. Who can make a complaint?**

A. Anyone can make a complaint if they feel that:-

• They have been unfairly treated by LONGFORD CCC

• That a service to which they are entitled to is not provided

• That a service which is being provided is inadequate

**Q. How do I make a complaint?**

A. All complaints must be made in writing (by e-mail or letter) and must state clearly that a complaint is being made; the basis for that complaint and what follow up action is envisaged as a result of the complaint. You should also state whether you require your complaint to be treated in a strictly confidential manner.

**Q. How do I know my complaint is being dealt with?**

A. Your complaint will be acknowledged by LONGFORD CCC within 3 working days of its receipt stating who is dealing with your complaint and the contact details of that person. A response to your complaint will be issued to you by LONGFORD CCC within 15 working days of the receipt of your complaint. The response will detail the views of LONGFORD CCC with regard to your complaint and any direct/indirect action that might have occurred as a result of your complaint.

**Q. What if I am not happy with the LONGFORD CCC response to my complaint?**

A. You can have your response reviewed by the board of LONGFORD CCC who will review details of complaints and issue a decision on same.

**CCC Procedures for Filling Complaints**

**Step 1.** **Make a complaint.**

LONGFORD CCC will accept complaints in writing by ***e-mail or regular post.***

All complaints must contain details of your grievance:

- Name and contact information of a person submitting the complaint

(the LONGFORD CCC **will not accept** anonymous complaints).

- Detailed description of complaint, including dates, times, direct quotes whenever possible, first hand facts and observations, names of persons involved, witnesses if any, etc.

Written complaint must be sent to the **County Childcare Coordinator**, Longford County Childcare Committee, Richmond Street, Longford N39 YY75

If you do not wish to submit your complaint directly to the County Childcare Committee, please refer your complaint to the Chairperson of County Childcare Committee at the above address. Details of the Chairperson and Board Members can be found on our website at: [www.longfordchildcare.ie](http://www.longfordchildcare.ie)

**Step 2. Investigation of your complaint.**

The Coordinator/Chairperson will acknowledge a receipt of your complaint no later than 3 working days after its receipt. The complaint letter will be recorded and dealt with appropriately.

***Exception:*** if complaint contains information about direct danger to the children (health, safety, and/or child protection issues), it will be given priority and dealt with immediately. During this process the CCC will refer the complaint directly to Tusla (the Child and Family Agency) or local An Garda Síochána in line with ***LONGFORD*** Childcare Committee’s Child Protection Policy.

**Step 3. Response to your complaint.**

LONGFORD CCC will provide you with a written response to your complaint within 15 working days after the start of investigation.

If you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint, LONGFORD CCC will inform you how to make a formal complaint about our work to have your response reviewed by the board of LONGFORD CCC who will review details of complaints and issue a decision on same.

**LONGFORD CCC Complaint Policy and Procedures in relation to Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare Services and Childminders**

**LONGFORD CCC Complaint Policy**

LONGFORD CCC believes that all parents/guardians are entitled to expect courteous, prompt, and careful attention to their needs and wishes. Therefore, it is the primary responsibility of the CCC to give a serious and prompt attention to any raised concerns about Early Learning and Care and School Age Services and Childminders. All complaints and raised concerns will be dealt in a professional and confidential manner.

We anticipate that some concerns/issues may be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate childcare owner/staff member or directly to the childminder. If this does not achieve the desired outcome or parent/guardian believes the concern is of a more serious nature and would not be resolved in this manner, Parent/Guardian are advised to follow the steps outlined in filling complaints section of this document.

**What is a complaint?**

A *complaint* is an expression of dissatisfaction concerning of a service provided by a childcare provider (crèche, preschool, sessional service, school age service, childminder, etc.).The LONGFORD CCC is not an enforcement agency. The LONGFORD CCC cannot act on complaints in matters of Preschool Regulations, admission, fees, staff appointments, promotions, dismissals or similar matters. Complaints containing information about child protection and/or health and safety issues will be referred to the Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla and/or An Garda Siochana.

The LONGFORD CCC will act in the following manner when complaint is received:

1. CCC Staff will manage the different types of complaints that are received into the CCC office and direct customer to the appropriate agency (ie Pobal, DCYA, TUSLA)..
2. If complaint cannot be resolved in an informal manner with ELC/SAC service, LONGFORD CCC will advise complaintant that CCC will not withhold any personal data and signpost them to the relevant agency.

**Confidentiality**

When handling a parent complaint or concern, the LONGFORD CCC will:

Treat all parent information in confidence to the greatest extent possible and consistent with the public interest and the right to:

* Statistical purposes will be made anonymous and all identifiable data will be removed.
* However, where the screening and /or investigation of the complaint indicates that there is a requirement to disclose some or all of the details of the complaint, e.g. there is evidence of child protection issues that must be reported in accordance with the Children First Guidelines, the complainant will be informed immediately and the information will be directed to the appropriate agency i.e. Tusla or An Garda Siochana.