

COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS and COMPLAINTS: A GUIDE FOR SERVICE USERS

This complaints process is for families and children who use Coram IAC services.

Coram IAC provides a range of services on matters relating to intercountry and domestic 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 Country Programmes
- Providing adoption support services to adopters and adoptees (children and adult adoptees)
- Providing training and education to professionals
- Signposting adoptees and birth relatives to Intermediary services where there has been an international component to the adoption.

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

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 us 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 Coram IAC.

Who to contact at Coram 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.

Managing Director - all services	Irene Levine
Head of Service - Domestic Adoption, Assessment; Information and Training and Adoption Support Services	Vacant Post
Team Manager – Information & Advice <i>Interim Registered Manager</i>	Tanya Gutter
Adoption Manager - Assessment - Intercountry	Nirmal Gracian
Senior Practitioners - Assessment - Intercountry	Charlotte Watts Sandra Crann
Adoption Manager – Domestic Adoption and Adoption Support	Nadine Williams-Mugenyi
Senior Practitioners - Domestic Adoption	Patricia McGinty Jo Simpson
Senior Practitioners - Adoption Support	Lorna Ramsay Jessica Spenceley
Adoption Manager - Post Approval - Intercountry	Horia Astalos
Senior Practitioners - Post Approval	Paula Bennet Vanessa Inniss Patricia Harbour

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

Coram IAC want all those who use our services to receive a courteous and professional response that is appropriate to people's needs regardless of sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, religion, age or disability.

We hope you will have no reason to complain. However, if you feel dissatisfied with any aspect of the contact you have with us then we welcome the opportunity to rectify the situation. We take complaints seriously because they highlight any problems with our services and can help us to improve things.

If you have not been satisfied in any way with the services provided by Coram 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 endeavour to put right areas where we have performed below par.

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

Procedure for formal complaints

We would prefer you to write to us if you have a complaint against the service, by either email or post. However, the Coram Group's Complaints 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 Coram IAC's services, please write in the first instance to the relevant Manager, Head of Service or the Managing Director at Coram IAC's registered e-mail address detailing your complaint.

If you are writing, please mark the correspondence confidential.

You will receive acknowledgement of your complaint within 2 days. The Manager or the Head of Service or Managing Director will investigate the matter and a report produced. 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 Coram's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

Stage Two

If you feel you have not had a satisfactory response from Coram IAC staff Stage 1 complaint, you have the right to appeal in writing to the CEO of the Coram Group within 4 weeks of receiving your written response to your Stage 1 complaint.

The Stage 2 appeal should be made to the senior manager involved (who will be responsible for escalating the appeal to the CEO) and copied into the complaints@coram.org.uk inbox or via post and marked confidential to:

Coram Group Head Quality and Safeguarding
Complaints
41 Brunswick Square
London
WC1N 1 AZ

Or by email to complaints@coram.org.uk

The Chief Executive will provide written acknowledgement of the appeal within 1 week and will appoint someone to investigate the complaint and make a written report within 21 days or a progress update at 14 day intervals.

The Chief Executive will write to you and tell you of any action to be taken, and a timescale for the implementation of those actions.

Should you believe further action is required you will be advised of Stage 3 process at this stage in relation to the service and relevant trustee board for this service and the timescale for the written reply to you. Where a complaint is upheld the Chair and Trustees will agree appropriate action and if necessary disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with Coram Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

Information about the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)

Prospective or existing adopters who have already been through a brief or full assessment or adopters whose approval will be terminated can access the independent IRM process. This avenue is only available in cases where prospective or existing adopters received a qualifying determination regarding their suitability to adopt and who feel they do not agree with it. [Independent Review Mechanism - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/independent-review-mechanism)

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

Whilst it is important that you give Coram IAC's 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 Coram 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 Coram IAC's services.

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

Operational Manager
Charity Commission
2nd Floor
Queens Dock
Liverpool
L3 4DQ

Coram 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

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>