Appendix D

Factors to consider when developing a plan for involving children and young people in a complaints process

- Try to find out as much as you can about the child’s or young person’s specific needs and background before you first meet with them.
- If you are aware that the child or young person has a disability or any communication support or other specific needs, ensure that these are catered for.
- Be mindful of any issues that relate to the child’s or young person’s cultural background or issues relating to their sexual orientation, intersex status or gender.
- Allow adequate time for all discussions.
- Make sure the venue is appropriate.
- Explain how they can participate, what is likely to be involved and what might be required of them.
- Ask them about how they would like to be kept informed and check in regularly in case things change.
- Ask them who they would like to support them throughout the complaints process and if they have any specific needs to help them feel safe and comfortable.
- Think about the likely questions they will have about the complaints process and have your answers ready.
- Explain the type of information you may need from them clearly and simply and why it’s important. Be clear if the discussion will be confidential or if certain information will need to be shared.
- Be clear, honest and realistic about the boundaries of a discussion and what can change. It is critical that you are genuine in your approach to children and young people and follow through on what you say you will do. Credibility needs to be earned and can be easily lost.
- Listen to what you are being told. Children and young people may have a very different view to you or what you expect, so acknowledge, value and take what they say seriously.
- Ensure you have procedures in place to provide support to any child to prevent or reduce any anxiety or distress.
- Provide feedback to children and young people about how their views have informed decisions along the way.
- At the end of the process, seek their views about their experience of the complaints process. Let them know what changes have been made as a result.