Foster Home Complaint Process

What happens when there is a complaint about a Foster Home?

How do I find out who is investigating a licensing complaint?

Contact offices in the following areas:

Region 1 OFCL
1313 Atlantic, Suite 2000
Spokane, WA 99201
(509) 363-3480

(Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Stevens, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Lincoln, Grant, Adams, Whitman counties)

Region 2 OFCL
1002 N. 18th Avenue
Yakima, WA 98901
(509) 225-6570

(Kittitas, Yakima, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, Asotin counties)

Region 3 OFCL
400 N Broadway, Building B, #540
Everett, WA 98201
(425) 339-2981

(Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, San Juan counties)

Region 4 OFCL
2809 28th Avenue S.
Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 721-6610

(Seattle, North King County, Bellevue, Bothell, Bremerton, Kirkland, Renton, Kent, Auburn and vicinity)

Region 5 OFCL
1949 S. State Street
Tacoma, WA 98405
(253) 983-6434

(Pierce, King counties)

Region 6 OFCL
6860 Capitol Blvd. S., Bldg. #342
Tumwater, WA 98504
(360) 725-6765

(Cowlitz, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Mason, Pacific, Lewis, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Thurston, Skamania, Clark, Klickitat counties)

Who do I call if I have further concerns?

Children’s Administration Constituent Relations 1-800-723-4831
Office of the Family & Children’s Ombudsmen 1-800-571-7321
When a person is concerned about a situation in a family foster home, they can call the local Children’s Administration Intake to make a referral.

**Foster Care Providers**

Providers may be contacted after a person complains to Children’s Administration Intake about a situation in family foster homes.

**What happens next?**

All referrals/complaints are entered in the Department of Social and Health Services Children’s Administration computer system for tracking. Depending on the nature of the complaint, either the OFCL licensor or the DLR CPS worker will investigate.

**What determines if the complaint is investigated by OFCL or DLR CPS?**

DLR CPS staff investigate complaints about child abuse and neglect. These complaints include:

- Physical Abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Supervision-related Neglect
- Social Abuse
- Exploitation
- Medical Neglect
- Death of a Child

OFCL staff investigate complaints regarding violations of licensing rules in family foster homes. These complaints include:

- Lack of Supervision for Foster Children
- Over Capacity
- Corporal Punishment for Foster Children
- Discipline for Foster Children
- Nutritional Care
- Nutrition
- Health/Sanitation
- Substance Abuse
- Other Violations

**If DLR CPS determines the complaint should be investigated, based on its criteria, what happens next?**

**DLR CPS workers:**

- Notify you of the allegations as early as possible without jeopardizing the investigation and get your side of the story.
- Conduct a thorough and unbiased investigation of the facts including interviews with alleged victims, witnesses, and others with relevant information.
- Determine whether or not the alleged incident occurred as described and if so, is considered to be Abuse or Neglect of a child according to state law (RCW 26.44).

It is important that you understand that even if DLR/CPS staff determine that you did not abuse or neglect a child in your care, it may be necessary for your licensor to continue working with you about licensing violations that may have become apparent during the investigation. If serious violations were found to have occurred, it may be necessary for your licensor to take action against your license.

**If the complaint involves allegations of licensing violations, the licensor may take the following actions:**

- Interview children
- Interview foster parents
- Visit the home either announced or unannounced
- Review child’s individual supervision plan, if applicable
- Interview other witnesses
- Review child’s physical and behavioral issues
- Contact collateral sources of information
- Continuously assess the safety of the children as additional information becomes available.

THE LICENSOR WILL RESPOND TO PERSONS INVOLVED IN THE COMPLAINT AT TWO POINTS:

1) When it is determined whether the complaint is being investigated by DLR/CPS or OFCL staff.

2) At the conclusion of the investigation.