The Children’s Social Care Complaints Process explained

For parents and carers
Talking about problems you have had with our services or our staff can help us make things better for everyone.

You can also make suggestions about improving existing services, providing new ones or express your appreciation to a member of staff.

Our complaints procedure aims to:

- make it easy for you to complain
- help resolve your complaint
- make it easy for you to pass on comments or compliments
- make sure you get a quick response
- give you the right to a second opinion
- keep you informed of our progress in dealing with your complaint
- put you in touch with a local councillor, if you want their help.
Your views are important to us

We aim to provide services of the highest standard. Your feedback is an important part of this process as it helps us to improve and develop services. The form inside this booklet can be used to make comments, compliments or complaints.

Comments

Your comments and suggestions are very important to us. They can show us where we may be failing and where we may have work to do. If you have thoughts and ideas about things you think we could improve, please let us know.

Compliments

It is useful for us to hear from you when we get things right or do things really well. Your compliment will help us to be sure we are giving you good quality service and importantly, it gives staff encouragement to continue delivering service of the highest standard.

Complaints

Children’s social services is part of the children’s department. We accept that things can go wrong but we want to get them right. If you are not happy about the way you have been treated, you have a right to complain and your complaint may help to improve services for everyone.
What can you do?

- Ask to speak to the relevant social worker or their manager
- Complete and return the enclosed prepaid form (no stamp needed):
  Customer Care and Complaints Team
  Tri-borough Children’s Services
  Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
  The Town Hall
  Hornton Street
  London W8 7NX
- Telephone the customer care and complaints officer on 020 7745 6501
  Freephone: 0800 202 6210
- Email: socialcarecomplaints@westminster.gov.uk
- Go to our website at: westminster.gov.uk/childrens-services-complaints, clicking ‘children’s online form’ and following the instructions.
Customer feedback form

Detach this four page form from the booklet (without tearing along the perforations), fill it in and seal it by moistening the glued strips.
We want to treat everyone fairly. We would be grateful if you would answer a few questions so that we can make sure that we are providing a good service to everyone in our community. You do not have to give us this information, but if you do, it will not affect how we deal with your complaint. We will keep it confidential and will only use it for putting together statistics which cannot be related back to you.

If you agree that we can use your information in this way, please tick this box □

Are you □ Male or □ Female?

What age are you?
□ 18-24 □ 25-29 □ 30-39 □ 40-49 □ 50-59 □ 60-65 □ 65+

Do you have a disability?
□ Yes □ No If yes, please provide details:
Please outline the nature of your complaint, comment or compliment:
Customer Care and Complaints Team

Tri-borough Children’s Services

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

The Town Hall

Hornton Street

London W8 7NX
What will happen, should you wish to make a formal complaint?

The complaints procedure has three stages:

**Stage 1 - Problem solving**

We will discuss the problem with you and everyone involved. A manager should write to you within 10 working days. You will be notified if the matter will take longer to be dealt with. The letter will say whether they agree with your complaint and what they are going to do about it.

**Stage 2 - Formal investigation**

If you are still not satisfied with the Stage 1 response or you feel that your case should be considered at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure, you can make this request, in writing.

The complaints team will assess your complaint and request and if appropriate, appoint an independent investigator to look into the matter. Another independent person will also be involved to ensure that the investigation is fair. The investigation team will interview you and everyone concerned and prepare reports with recommendations regarding what to do about your complaint.

You should get the investigation report and a letter from a senior manager within 25 working days (or within 65 working days, if the matter is very complicated).
Stage 3 - Independent review panel

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, you can request, in writing, for your complaint to be reviewed by an independent review panel, of three people.

Please note, the panel will not be able to reinvestigate the complaint nor consider any new complaints that have not been looked into at Stage 2.

The panel will arrange to meet with you and other relevant individuals within 30 working days of the customer care and complaints team receiving your request. The panel will make a decision within five working days. The Executive Director of Children’s Services will write to you within a further 15 working days about what he intends to do about your complaint.
Local Government Ombudsman

If you are still dissatisfied with the decision of the review panel, you can contact the local government ombudsman. The ombudsman is an independent person who investigates complaints about local councils. The ombudsman’s investigations are free and confidential. You can contact the ombudsman at:

Phone: 0300 061 0614
Fax: 024 7682 0001
Email: advice@lgo.org.uk
Website: www.lgo.org.uk
Write to: The Local Government Ombudsman
         PO Box 4771
         Coventry CV4 0EH

However, by law the ombudsman may not investigate your complaint before you have exhausted all three stages of the complaints procedures.

You can ask your local councillor or Member of Parliament to take up your complaint. You can get their names and address from your local library, or the council information centre on 020 7641 6000

If you are not sure which department to approach, please contact the customer care officer on 020 7745 6501
Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and different languages.

If you require further assistance please use the contact details below.

Telephone: 020 7745 6501
Email: socialcarecomplaints@westminster.gov.uk