



Feedback for Children's Services



Feedback

Cambridgeshire County Council welcomes feedback, as it provides us with the opportunity to learn lessons and improve our services. The Customer Care Team considers compliments, enquiries, representations and complaints in relation to Children's Services, facilitating where appropriate a response, whilst making sure that any agreed actions are completed, and organisational learning is disseminated to relevant members of staff.

The Customer Care Team will provide help and advice to anyone wishing to provide feedback. Please let the Team know if you have any communication needs, and they will make arrangements to support you as best as possible.

If you have questions about Children's Services involvement with your family, it is probably best you address these directly with the service who is working with you, as you are likely to receive a faster response if you do so. However, if you are unsure about who to speak to or feel your query is not being responded to appropriately, you are welcome to contact the Customer Care Team for assistance.

We accept that there may be occasions when you are dissatisfied or disagree with a decision made, where there may have been a misunderstanding or a process which has not been fully explained. If the service working with you are unable to resolve the issue to your satisfaction informally, you can raise a complaint through the Customer Care Team.



Who can make comments or complaint?

Any child or young person who is looked after by the Local Authority or is in need of support from Children's Services. Also anyone who the Local Authority decides has sufficient interest in a child's welfare, either on their own behalf or on behalf of a child or young person.

Sometimes an advocate will contact us on behalf of a child, young person or a vulnerable adult.

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) are independent of the Local Authority and they have a particular role in helping looked after children or young people and those subject to child protection plans. Their contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

How can I make a complaint?

You can do this in a number of ways, including speaking directly to a member of staff, completing our online form, calling us, writing a letter or sending us an e-mail. The Customer Care Team can also receive text messages. If you prefer, you can use this leaflet and send it to us using FREEPOST.

The link for the on-line form is:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/complain>

All complaints are passed to the Customer Care Team, regardless of how they arrive.



What can I complain about?

This is of course up to you but it does need to link to a service we provide to children and families, and it should relate to something that happened in the last 12 months. If your complaint is older than this, we will only consider it if there is a reason why you could not have complained sooner.

We will not be able to deal with a complaint that has already been considered and responded to at all three stages of a complaint process or where all issues raised have been previously upheld.

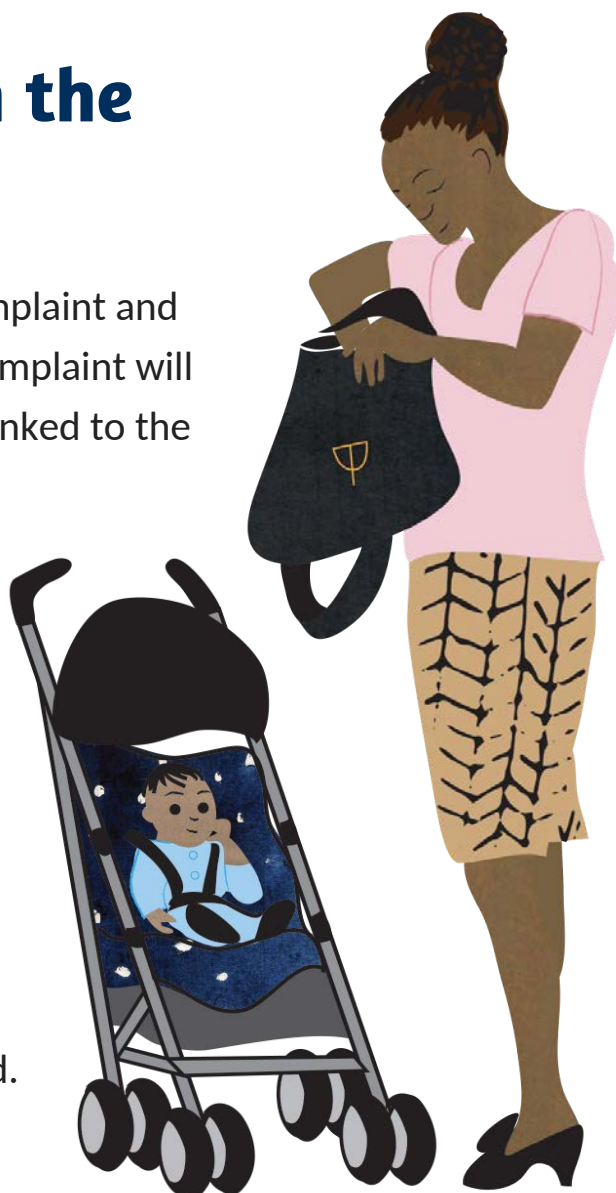
The complaint process cannot deal with matters where to do so would prejudice any concurrent investigation such as; Court proceedings; Tribunals; Disciplinary proceedings; or Criminal proceedings. Nor can we change a decision made to undertake a Child Protection investigation; to hold a Child Protection Conference or a decision made at Conference.

What can I expect from the Complaint Process?

The Customer Care Team will look at your complaint and may contact you to check the details. Your complaint will then be passed to the Manager most closely linked to the situation so they can investigate and respond.

The Customer Care Team will send you an acknowledgement letter within three working days to tell you that your complaint has been received.

Sometimes the Responding Manager will contact you by telephone or invite you to a meeting, especially if the situation is complex, however, we will usually respond within 10 working days of your complaint being received.



If a meeting is scheduled, you can expect a letter confirming the discussion and any actions agreed within 10 working days. Occasionally, there may be reasons why a response might take slightly longer but you will be kept informed about this and you will receive a reply within 20 working days.

If you remain dissatisfied following receipt of the response, you can contact the Customer Care Team with your feedback. This feedback will be considered by the Customer Care Manager, who may contact you to discuss your unresolved concerns and consider next steps.

What happens if I am still unhappy?

All complainants have access to a 3 Stage complaint process but we will try to resolve your concerns at Stage 1 if at all possible. To this end, the Customer Care Team may try to help by arranging for you to meet a Senior Manager or by organising a supplementary response.

Where the matter is not resolved at Stage 1, you have the right to request consideration of your complaint at Stage 2. If you request that your complaint is considered at Stage 2, the Customer Care Team may need to contact you to discuss what aspects of your original complaint you wish to take forward and what you hope will be the outcome.

Corporate Complaints at Stages 2 and 3

If the service you are complaining about is not about a Social Worker but rather another Worker employed by Children's Services, your complaint will follow our Corporate Complaint procedure and will be passed to a more Senior Manager than the original Responding Manager to investigate. If you remain unhappy following the conclusion of Stage 2, you can request that your complaint be reviewed by Cambridgeshire County Council's Chief Executive.



This is Stage 3 and is the final stage of our Corporate Complaint Procedure. We aim to send each response to you within 10 working days of your request for Stage 2 or 3, should there be any delay you will be kept informed.

Children's Social Care Complaints at Stages 2 and 3

Most Stage 2 complaints about Children's Social Care will involve an independent investigation conducted by two Independent People. These people have slightly different roles which will be explained to you in more detail if your complaint is to be considered at Stage 2 of this process. As soon as the issues to be taken forward for investigation have been agreed and a written 'Schedule of Complaint' signed, the investigation will start.

As part of the investigation process, you will need to give written consent to the Independent People reading your records and talking to members of staff about your situation.

The investigation should be completed, and the Local Authority's response sent to you within 25 working days. Where it is not possible to complete the investigation and response within 25 working days, Stage 2 may be extended to a maximum of 65 working days.

Once the Independent People have finished their investigation, a senior manager acting as an Adjudicating Officer will consider the findings, conclusions and recommendations along with your desired outcomes. The Adjudicating Officer will write to you, enclosing the Independent People's investigation reports with their own conclusion on your complaint. If you remain dissatisfied on receipt of this response, you have the right to request your complaint be submitted to a Review Panel for consideration, however, this request needs to be made within 20 working days of the conclusion of the Stage 2 process.



If your request is taken forward to Stage 3, this would involve setting up a Panel of three new Independent People. The role of the Panel is to look at the original complaint and response, together with the Stage 2 reports and response from the Adjudicating Officer. The Panel considers whether the complaint has been thoroughly and fairly investigated, and whether the Local Authority has done all it could to remedy the situation. It is not a new investigation although you will have chance to come to the Panel to explain why you are still unhappy. Further details about Stage 3 will be provided to you if you wish to proceed with this part of the complaint procedure.

But I am still unhappy. Who else can I turn to?

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) can look at complaints about Local Authorities. The LGO is completely independent from Cambridgeshire County Council. The LGO usually wants to know that a complaint has been through all three Stages of the Complaint procedure before they become involved but it is a service that can provide advice whenever you feel you need it. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

If you have any questions about the content of this leaflet, please contact the Customer Care Team for advice.



Useful contact details

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – Customer Care Team

Children's Services

FREEPOST Box SH1215

Shire Hall

Cambridge

CB3 0AP

Telephone: 01223 699 664 or 714 765 (or 0345 045 5203)

Text: 07795 092 404

Email: Childrens.ServicesFeedback@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Website: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

If you would like a copy of this leaflet on audio cassette, CD or in Braille, large print or other languages, please call 0345 045 5203

THE NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCACY SERVICE (NYAS)

***Remember NYAS support is free**

Unit AA The Anderson Centre

Ermine Business Park

Spitfire Close

Huntingdon

PE29 6XY

Telephone: 0808 808 1001 (This is a Freephone number from landlines. Calls from mobiles may be chargeable).

Text: 0743 596 7405

Email: help@nyas.net

Website: www.nyas.net



THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN (LGO)

PO Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614 (Calls to 03 numbers will cost no more than calls to national geographic numbers starting 01 or 02).

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Fax: 024 7682 0001

Text: 'call back' to 0762 480 4299

Feedback

Please give this form to the Manager responsible for the Service you receive OR send it to the Customer Care Team

Service User's Name

Date of birth (if 18 or under)

.....

Address

.....

Post Code

Phone Number

If you are writing on someone's behalf

Your Name

Relationship to the Service User

Your Address

.....

Post Code

Phone Number

I wish to make a (please circle):

Positive Comment Comment Complaint

Which part of the service do you want to comment on and what, if anything, would you want to change? Please give us details (If there is not enough room here, please use a separate piece of paper and attach to this form)

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Signed: Date:

.....fold and post.....

**The Customer Care Manager
Children's Services Feedback**

FREEPOST

SH1215

Shire Hall

Cambridge

CB3 0AP