

# Children's Services

## Information

### Making a Comment or Complaint

#### Our Aim

We want to provide good quality services so if you have a comment or suggestion or complaint, please tell us about it. This will help us to improve services and, if you have a complaint, it will give us the opportunity to put it right for you and learn from what you say.

#### How do I make a complaint?

You can:

- Talk to your social worker or key worker or their manager about the problem.
- Contact the Complaints Procedure Manager by email:  
[complaints\\_cypandadults@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:complaints_cypandadults@bathnes.gov.uk)
- phone: 01225 477931
- write to her at:  
Complaints Procedure Manager,  
Children's Services,  
Freepost SWB10433,  
Bath BA1 1BF
- Use the link to the on-line form opposite.
- Fill in our complaint form and send to the address above.

If you need an interpreter, tell us your language and we can make arrangements for an interpreter.

## Is there anyone else who can help?

You can ask for a friend or relative to speak or write to us for you.  
If you are a child or young person we can put you in touch with the advocacy service at Off the Record. <http://www.offtherecord-banes.co.uk/>

If you are an adult wishing to make a complaint we can put you in touch with other organisations that provide advocacy support.

## What can I complain about?

These are some of the things you might want to complain about:

- If we do not deliver a service on time
- If you receive a poor quality service
- The attitude or behaviour of staff
- If you are unhappy with an assessment, care plan or review
- Decisions you do not agree with

If you complain about something that happened or a decision made more than 12 months ago we may not accept your complaint. If we do not accept your complaint we will write and tell you why not.

## What happens when I make a complaint?

The complaints procedure can be used by any child or young person who is using our services, a parent, carer, relative or anyone else who we believe has a close enough interest.

Most complaints can be sorted out by talking informally to the person responsible for providing you with a service. If it isn't possible to sort it out in this way we will begin the complaint procedure.

We will try to deal with your complaint in confidence, however, we will need to talk to other people so that we can investigate thoroughly.

If your complaint is about an independent provider, such as a care home we will usually expect them to look into your complaint about their services in the first instance.

There are three stages to the complaints procedure:

### Stage 1 Complaint Resolution

- When you complain, we will write to you within 2 working days to say which manager will deal your complaint.

- The manager will try to resolve your complaint within 10 working days. To resolve your complaint, the manager will need to understand what the problem is and also how you think it can be sorted out.
- If the manager is not able to resolve your complaint fully within 10 working days, they will contact you to arrange more time. You might also want more time to meet with your advocate. The manager should take no more than 20 working days to answer your complaint.
- The manager will write to you saying how they have tried to sort out your complaint. Sometimes they may not agree with all of your complaints and they will give reasons for this in their letter.
- If your complaint involves other organisations such as health or education we will try to provide a joint response to your complaint.

### **What if I am not satisfied with the manager's response to my complaint?**

We will do all we can to sort out your complaint at Stage 1. However, if you are not satisfied, you can choose to progress to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure.

To do this you should contact the Complaints Procedure Manager within 20 working days of getting the letter about your stage 1 complaint.

If your complaint is very complicated we can miss out stage 1 and treat it as a stage 2 complaint from the beginning.

#### **Stage 2 investigation**

You may be unhappy because you do not agree with what the manager has said or because you have not had a response within the agreed time.

We will talk to you about your complaint and what think should be done to put it right. We may suggest ways of sorting out your complaint without having to do an investigation.

If you are a child or young person we will appoint an Independent Person to make sure the investigation is carried out fairly.

The investigating officer will gather all the facts about your complaint, which will involve interviewing everyone concerned as well as reading files and letters. The investigating officer will write a report and then a senior manager will write to you to explain what action will be taken. A copy of the report will be sent to you.

### **Is there anything else I can do if I am still not satisfied?**

If you are still not satisfied, you can ask for a review of the Council's recommendations and decisions by a Review Panel.

#### **Stage 3 Review Panel**

You will need to make your request for a Review Panel within 25 days of receiving the letter with the findings of the Stage 2 investigation.

The Panel is made up of three people who are completely independent of the Council.

You can have someone to support you at the Panel.

The members of the Review Panel will make recommendations to the Council about anything it should do to sort out your complaint.

## Your Local Government Ombudsman

We hope that we can sort out your complaint to your satisfaction. There are no further stages in our complaints procedure. If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, you may contact the Local Government Ombudsman.

Your Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted at:

The Local Government Ombudsman  
PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH

Advice Line: Lo-call 0300 061 0614

Enquiries: <http://www.lgo.org.uk/contactus/>

### When we deal with your complaint we promise to:

- Treat you with respect
- Treat your complaint seriously and do our utmost to put it right as quickly as possible
- Respect your confidentiality
- Keep you informed about what is going on

## For more information

If you would like to know more about the complaints process, please contact

The Complaints Procedure Manager  
Children's Services  
PO Box 25, Riverside  
Temple Street, Keynsham  
Bristol BS31 1DN

Tel: 01225 477931

Fax: 01225 396111

Email: [complaints\\_cypandadults@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:complaints_cypandadults@bathnes.gov.uk)

**This information can be made available in a range of languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats. Contact Family Information Service on FREEPHONE 0800 073 1214, available Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 4.45pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm Minicom 07980 998906 Text us on 07980 998 906 or email [Family\\_InformationService@BATHNES.GOV.UK](mailto:Family_InformationService@BATHNES.GOV.UK) If you need translation or interpretation, or someone to sign in BSL for you this can also be arranged.**