

Complaining about Social Care Services within Children and Family Services

Children and Family Services is responsible for providing a range of social care services to children, young people and their parents or carers, including:

- Assessment of children's and families' needs
- Family support
- Fostering
- Child Protection
- Caring for a Child with special needs
- Children who commit crime

This leaflet explains how to make a complaint and what we will do about it.

The complaints process consists of three stages. Most matters are resolved at Stage 1.

Stage 1

The senior manager responsible for the service you have concerns about will investigate the matter and write to you with their findings. This is normally carried out within 10 working days.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, you can request that your complaint be progressed to the next stage. You have 20 working days to do this. Before moving to Stage 2, the Complaints Manager will contact you to establish if there is anything further that could be done

to resolve your complaint and may arrange a meeting with you to discuss your complaint in person. If it is still not possible to resolve your complaint, they will arrange for the matter to be dealt with at Stage 2.

Stage 2

We will appoint somebody independent to investigate your complaint.

Stage 3

If you are still dissatisfied you can request to take your complaint to a Stage 3 Review Panel.

If you are still unhappy with the way we have dealt with your complaint once the complaints process has been exhausted, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman.

Part A

If you would like advice on how to make your complaint, please telephone the Complaints Manager on **01635 519787**. You can also leave a message out of hours.

Alternatively you can email ccsc@westberks.gov.uk

School complaints

We are not able to deal with complaints against schools as they have their own complaints procedure. If your complaint is about a school, your first contact should always be either the Head Teacher or Chair of the Governing Body

Before you complain

- All complaints are taken seriously and we do our best to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. Before making your complaint, the following information may be helpful:
- Have you brought your concerns to the attention of staff who know you and your situation? Most complaints can be sorted out by talking to the person you have been dealing with, or their manager if you prefer.
- Do you have parental responsibility? Whilst we can accept complaints from individuals who are considered to have sufficient interest in a child, it may not be possible to deal with your concerns unless the child's parent, guardian or carer has given their consent for someone to act on their behalf.
- Your complaint must be capable of being investigated and relate to the Department's involvement with a child.
- You should make it clear what you are seeking as an outcome to your complaint.
- The complaints process cannot overturn a decision of the court or a tribunal/panel decision. If you are concerned about a decision that has been made by the court that relates to a child, you should seek independent legal advice.
- Your complaint should be made within 12 months of the events leading to the complaint.
- We will always accept a complaint made by a child or a young person.