



The Children's Social Care **COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

For parents and carers



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.

If you would like the leaflet explained in your language, large print, audiotope or Braille, please email CBSTeam@lambeth.gov.uk

What can you do?

Ask to speak to the relevant social worker or their manager.

Telephone the Complaints Team Manager on:
Phone **020 7926 9777**

Or the Complaints and Business Support:
Email **cbsteam@lambeth.gov.uk**

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. Find out how on the next page.





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.

Talking about problems you have had with our services or our staff can help us make things better for everyone. It also helps us learn and improve.

If you would like to say thank you about something good we have done, we would like to hear from you too.

What will happen, should you wish to make a formal complaint?

The complaints procedure has three stages:

1 Problem solving

You can speak to the Social Worker, Team Manager or Complaints Manager about your complaint. You can call the Complaints Manager on **020 7926 9777** or email the complaints team on **cbsteam@lambeth.gov.uk**

You can use a search engine on your device, type in 'Lambeth Council Children's Complaint'. Once you are on this page, click the purple button which says: **Make a complaint**

A form will pop up and you can write your complaint in that form. When you have finished click the purple button which says: **Submit**

A manager should reply by writing to you within 10 working days. In some cases the social work team may need longer to respond to your complaint, an extension will be agreed with you. The letter will say whether they agree with your complaint and what is going to be done about it, you will also be given the option to progress your complaint to Stage 2.

Before you go to stage 2 we like to invite you to meet with the Team



Manager, so that you can talk about what you are unhappy about and reach an agreement to resolve your complaint.

This meeting does not affect your rights to go to a stage 2. We think it's a good idea because a face to face meeting can often help to resolve the problem quickly.

If you don't reach an agreement during this meeting you can go to Stage 2.

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 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).

3 Independent review panel

If you are unhappy with Stage 2 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 complaints team receiving your request. The panel will make a decision within five working days. The Director of Children's Social Care will write to you within a further 15 working days about what they intend 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**
Text **0762 480 4299**

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

If you are not sure which department to approach, please contact the Children's Social Care Complaints Manager:

Phone **020 7926 9777**
Email **cbsteam@lambeth.gov.uk**