

Have your say

A guide to making compliments, comments and complaints about Children's Services

How we can help?

Herefordshire Council's Children's Services aims to offer high quality services and would like to hear from you if you have any compliments, comments or complaints about the services we provide. We aim to make improvements from compliments as well as complaints.

This leaflet explains how you can make a complaint and how Children's Services will respond. Information about registering compliments, comments and complaints can also be found at: www.herefordshire.gov.uk.

Who else can help?

If you want help or support (not part of Children's Services) you can find information about local organisations and support on the Herefordshire Council WISH directory at <http://www.wishherefordshire.gov.uk>.

When can I make a complaint about Children's Services?

If you are not happy with the way we work with you or with the standard of services we provide, we want to know straight away so that we can make improvements. We will also accept complaints about other organisations providing services on our behalf.

All complaints must be submitted within 12 months from the date of the incident(s) in question.

Not everyone has an automatic right to complain, e.g. if you are an extended family member. This is because we may not be able to share information about someone else with you.

Our complaints procedure does not cover certain matters for which there is a formal right of appeal through an independent review process. Please consult our website for more information.

How will my complaint be dealt with?

Before submitting a formal complaint, try discussing your concerns with the service you are dealing with. This is usually the quickest way to sort matters out.

If you decide to raise a formal complaint, please make sure that you provide clear information regarding what your complaint is about and your desired outcome(s). Once

you have submitted your complaint, the Complaints Manager will decide the most appropriate way to resolve your complaint.

The stages of the complaints process are outlined below:

Stage 1 Resolution and response by an operational manager. Wherever possible you will get a response from a manager within 2 weeks (10 working days) or a maximum of 4 weeks (20 working days).

Stage 2 Investigation and report by an Investigating Officer. Should you remain dissatisfied, you should inform the Complaints Team. The team will then consider further options, which may include arranging an impartial investigation. If an impartial investigation is identified as the most appropriate way forward, you will be provided with the outcome in a maximum timescale of 13 weeks (65 working days). For children's Social Care complaints, an Independent Person will work alongside the Investigating Officer.

Stage 3 Review of Stage 2 Social Care Complaints by a Panel. Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, you should inform the Complaints Team within 4 weeks (20 working days). If your request is accepted, the Panel will normally be held within 6 weeks (30 working days). The Panel will make recommendations to the Director of Children's Services for the resolution of the complaint. The Director will write to you with the outcome of the Panel within 4 weeks (20 working days) of the Panel taking place.

For further information and an impartial discussion you may contact:
Children's representations and complaints team, Nelson House, Hereford, HR4 0DG,
Telephone: 01432 260180

Email: childrenscomplimentsandcomplaints@herefordshire.gov.uk

Information can also be found online at <http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk>

What do I do if I am still not satisfied?

You can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to look at the issue. The Ombudsman's address is: The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH, Telephone: 0300 061 0614, website: www.lgo.org.uk.

You can also talk to your local Councillor. To find out their contact details, visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk or call our general enquiries number on 01432 260000.

This information can be made available on request in other formats, including large print, Braille, audio and other languages.