**Complaints By and For Children**

**Standards and Regulations**

**Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care:**

* [Standard 1 - Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf);
* [Standard 2 - Understand your role as a foster carer](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf);
* [Standard 4 - Know how to communicate effectively](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf);
* [Standard 6 - Keep children and young people safe from harm](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf).

**Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (England) 2011:**

* [Standard 1 - The child’s wishes and feelings and those significant them](http://www.minimumstandards.org/fost_one.html).

**Local Contacts**

Children and Young People who are Looked After have the right to have an Advocate from the Bradford Advocacy service provided by the Children’s Society.

An Advocate can speak up for the child/young person and can help them to get something stopped, started or changed.

An Advocate can:

* Help to sort problems out;
* Speak on behalf of the child and young person; and
* Help and support you when you are making a complaint on behalf of a child or young person.

**Contact: Bradford Advocacy with the Children’s Society**

The Children’s Society

Tel: 0808 175 4574

Email: bradford@childrenssociety.org.uk

You can also contact the Bradford Children and Family Trust Complaints Team directly on;
**Tel:** 01274 436820
**E-mail:** complaints.officer@bradford.gov.uk

**National Contacts**

**Children's Commissioner for England**
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Help at Hand - free, confidential support and advice for Children in Care, living away from home or receiving support from Children’s Services.

**Tel**: 0800 528 0731 (free phone number)
**E-mail:** help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

**Ofsted**
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

**Tel**: 0300 123 1231

If you want to make a complaint about the fostering service see [How Can I make a Complaint Against the Fostering Service provided by Foster for Bradford?](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/complaint_agency.html)

It is important not to confuse complaints with allegations although there is sometimes an overlap. Any concerns in relation to a child who may be in need of protection, must be dealt with under the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Procedures.

 **What a Complaint may be about**

* The foster carer;
* The fostering service;
* The Trust including the child’s social worker; or
* Something outside of this, like the child’s school/educational setting.

**Your role is to:**

* Listen to the child/young person, take them seriously and try not to be defensive about what they are saying;
* Tell others like the child’s social worker, their Independent Reviewing Officer or your Supervising Social Worker - they might see something in the complaint that you don’t;
* Try to help the child sort out the problem;
* Advocate (speak on their behalf) for the child where appropriate (like a pushy parent) depending on their age, stage of development and understanding;
* Help the child to access the formal complaints procedure for the fostering service or their local authority.
[How to make a comment or complaint about Children's Services](https://www.bradford.gov.uk/compliments-and-complaints/childrens-social-care/how-to-make-a-comment-or-complaint-about-childrens-services/) Bradford Children and Families Trust Children’s Services
* Ensure that they get feedback on what happens.

Most issues can be sorted out informally and speedily through discussion with either the child’s social worker or your Supervising Social Worker, depending on what the problem is. Sometimes, Fostering for Bradford’s Service's Manager may be the most appropriate person to speak to about the concerns.

 **How complaints by children are managed in the formal process**

**Stage 1 – Local Resolution:**

**Who:**
A team manager who knows about the child will look into their complaint. Ask your child’s social worker who their manager is or contact the Bradford Children and Families Trust Complaints Team directly or ask the child’s advocate to do so:

**Phone:** 01274 436820
**Email:** complaints.officer@bradford.gov.uk
You can also make a complaint online, see how to make a comment or complaint about Bradford Children and Families Trust.

**When:**
The manager will write to the child within 10 working days. They will also send a copy of the response to the Corporate Complaints Team. Sometimes it will not be possible to resolve the issue within the time scale, e.g. where files or records need to be checked or a key member of staff is not available so an extension of another 10 working days is allowed. The maximum period for a complaint to stay in Stage 1 is 20 working days

**What if the child is not happy?**

The complaint can go to Stage 2.

**Stage 2 - Investigation:**

**Who will investigate?:**

An investigating officer who does not know the child will look into and investigate the complaint.

An independent person will oversee the process to ensure that the child’s views are taken into account.

They will meet with the child/young person and discuss the problem. The child/young person’s advocacy worker can be there as well to support them.

**When:**
The investigators will send their report to the Complaints Manager within 25 working days of the receipt of the complaint. If this timescale is not possible, the Investigating Officer should consult with the Complaints Manager and agree a timescale for extension. In any event, this extension must not exceed a full response to the complaint within 65 working days. The child / young person / complainant should be informed out of the outcome of the complaint (or and delays).

**What if the child is not happy?**
The child/young person can take it to Stage 3, but they must do this within 20 working days.

**Stage 3 – Review Panels:**

**Who:**
A panel made of 3 independent people (who do not work for the Council) will meet with the child/young person (if the child/young person wants to), the advocacy worker, the people who investigated in Stage 2 and the Complaints Manager and the adjudicating officer who responded at Stage 2.

**When:**
They will send their views to the Director of Bradford Children’s Trust who will write to the child / young person within 15 working days after the panel.

**What if the child is not happy?**

If you are still not satisfied, you have the right to make representations to the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](http://www.lgo.org.uk/).

More detailed information on the complaints process, can be found in the Procedures Manual, see [Bradford Children's Services Online Procedures, Complaints and Representations](https://bradfordchildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_reps_complaints.html).