

CHILDREN'S SERVICES



**Comments, concerns,
complaints or compliments**
about Children's Services

bcpcouncil.gov.uk/complaints



Tell us what you think

We are listening ... What you tell us helps us learn and improve. We want to hear from you, whether it is about things we are doing well, or about where we need to make changes.

Please tell us if we have done something wrong; our staff are helpful and listen to you; we have or have not done something we should have; or if there are things we could do better.

Compliments

Compliments can also tell us when services are going well, and our staff appreciate being told that they are doing things right. We will make sure compliments are recorded and passed to the relevant people.

Complaints

If you are not happy with any part of the service you are receiving, please tell the staff providing the service. They will listen carefully to what you say and try to correct the problem quickly.

Generally, you will need to make your complaint within one year of the event you are not happy about. There are two complaint processes that are used in Children's Services. The Children's Act complaints procedure covers complaints regarding the council's children's social care services provision. Some issues may not fall within the Children's Act complaints procedure but may be covered by BCP Council's corporate complaints procedure. Either way, we will help you take the appropriate action and let you know if we are not able to look into your complaint.

Stage 1

If the matter cannot be resolved by the service and you want to make a complaint you can ask the member of staff providing the service or you can contact the Children's Services complaints team. You may prefer a relative or friend to contact us on your behalf.

It is helpful if you can write your complaint down but talking to us is fine. If you find it difficult to explain your complaint, please contact the complaints team who will assist you or appoint someone to help you.

Please let us know what has gone wrong and what you would like us to do about it. You can do this by contacting us – see contact details on the

back page. You will not be treated differently just because you have made a complaint.

The details of your complaint will then be recorded, and you will receive an acknowledgement from the complaints team. Within 10 to 20 working days of receiving your complaint, the member of staff investigating your complaint will tell you what has been found and what has been done about it.

If the member of staff is unable to keep to this timescale, they will write and tell you why and advise when you can expect a response.

Stage 2

If your complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1 and you want to take it further, you will need to contact the complaints team within 20 working days of receiving your Stage 1 response.

Please be clear about which aspects of your complaint have not been resolved and explain what you would like to happen. We may then consider your complaint at Stage 2 of the complaints process, also referred to as a complaint review for the council's own complaints process. If your complaint is following the Children's Act complaints procedure, we will ask an independent person to help with the investigation.

The complaints team will let you know what timescale applies to your complaint at Stage 2, this can be up to 65 working days. At the end of the process a senior manager within the service will write to tell you what has been found and what has been done about it.

Stage 3

If your complaint is following the Children's Act complaints procedure, and you think the Stage 2 response is unsatisfactory, you can ask the complaints team to arrange for a Stage 3 review of your complaint. You have 20 working days to tell us if you would like to go to Stage 3.

A Review Panel meeting will be held to which you will be invited. Others involved in the Stage 2 process will also be there. The Panel will review how your complaint has been managed so far and may make further suggestions about how to resolve your complaint.

This process should take around two months, but if it is going to take longer, we will let you know.

BCP Council Children's Services Complaints Team

T. 01202 118484 **E.** csccomments@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Write to us: Freepost RTKS-LEBR-YTAR,
BCP Council Children's Complaints
NBLO, Town Hall, Bournemouth BH2 6DY

bcpcouncil.gov.uk/complaints

If you are a child or young person who has a complaint about services you are receiving from BCP Council Children Social Care, you can get help from the independent advocacy service Action for Children. We can arrange this for you, or you can contact them directly.

Action for Children Dorset Services

T. 01202 525643 **E.** bdpadvocacy@actionforchildren.org.uk

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If you have been through all stages of our complaints procedure and are still unhappy, you can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to review your complaint.

The Ombudsman investigates complaints in a fair and independent way – it does not take sides. It is a free service.

The Ombudsman expects you to have given us a chance to deal with your complaint, before you contact them. If you have not heard from us within a reasonable time, it may decide to look into your complaint anyway. This is usually up to 12 weeks but can be longer for social care complaints that follow a statutory process.

Contact: **lgo.org.uk** **T.** 0300 061 0614

Opening hours – Monday to Friday: 10am to 4pm (except public holidays)

You can ask for this information in an alternative format if required. Please call **T.** 01202 118484 or **E.** csccomments@bcpcouncil.gov.uk or visit **bcpcouncil.gov.uk/complaints**

