

Children and Young Person's Complaints Policy and Procedure (shortened)

We are always looking for ways to improve the services we offer to you. You have a right to make a complaint if you are not happy with services you received from Children's Social Services. You can also tell us if there are things you think we have helped you with so we can make sure other young people can benefit from this. Whenever you get in touch with us in this way the Customer Relationship Team will write to you to tell you why we have taken these steps.

Who can complain?

- Any child or young person who has received a social care service either as a child in care or a child in need.
- A child or young person who is subject to a special guardianship order (SGO) – an SGO is a court order which gives the person caring for you clear, long term responsibilities for looking after you.

Complaints regarding Joint Adoption Service will be dealt with by Shropshire Council.

How do I make a complaint?

The Customer Relationship Team is there to explain to you what will happen with your complaint. You can contact them by:

- Telephone 01952 382006
- E-mail customer.relationship@telford.gov.uk

You are entitled to have the support of an advocate and we can help you get in touch with one. Advocates are someone who can say the things you want to say, for you. They make sure you are listened to and you are involved in decisions being made about your life.

Complaints made on behalf of a child or young person

An adult can make a complaint on your behalf – for you. If you are 12 or over the Customer Relationship Team will make sure that you agree with what is being said.

If you do not agree with what is being said then the complaint will go no further and the adult will be told why.

Anonymous complaints

If you want to make a complaint you must give us your details.

An anonymous complaint will not be considered, this is because we may need more details about it to take action but if we receive information that might relate to child protection or someone in danger we have a duty to pass this on.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about lots of things, such as:

- How a service has worked for you
- How long it took for you to receive a service

- Services you expected that did not happen
- Attitude or behaviour of staff – this may be either looked at as a complaint or through a different process. You will be told of any decision.

We are not able to look at complaints in some cases that are made while there are court or criminal proceedings taking place, if it is specifically about the court case. If this is the case the Customer Relationship Team will let you know the reason why.

What happens to my complaint?

All complaints are looked at individually.

You should make a complaint as soon as it happens, if you report it more than a year after, it may not be looked at. However this doesn't mean you shouldn't let us know about things that happened more than one year ago.

If we will not look at a complaint you will be told the reasons why and also about your right to contact the Local Government Ombudsman. It is their job is to investigate complaints in a fair and independent way and they won't take sides. Find out more at www.lgo.org.uk.

When a complaint is received, the Customer Relationship Team will send it to the manager of the service the complaint is about. The manager will get in touch with you and they will look at helping you with this. This can be on the phone, by a letter or in a meeting.

Telford and Wrekin Council's Children's Statutory complaints process is made up of three stages;

Stage 1 – All complaints go through Stage 1. Your complaint will be sent to the manager of the service who will get in touch with you within two weeks.

Stage 2 – If Stage 1 did not fix the problem or you do not understand what has happened, an investigation will take place. This can take up to 65 days. A report will be written and will have suggestions on how to fix the problem.

Stage 3 – If you are still not happy, you can ask for your complaint to be looked at by an Independent Review Panel. They will listen to everyone involved and help reach an agreement on what should happen to make things right.

If you are still not happy you can then contact the Local Government Ombudsman www.lgo.org.uk

So we can deal with your complaint, it is important that you:

- Give us all of the details of the complaint when you first tell us about it.
- Accept that Children's Social Services cannot look at certain complaints.
- Co-operate with the Customer Relationship Team who are looking at your complaint.

If you are unreasonable we may ask you to agree to only contact us in a certain way and at certain times, or through an adult such as an advocate or carer.