



Children's Commissioner for Wales

A brief guide to our Complaints Policy

www.childcomwales.org.uk



The Children's Commissioner wants to see Wales as a country where children and young people are respected, valued, listened to and supported to lead safe and happy lives.

We work for every child and young person in Wales who is under 18 or up to 25 years old if they have been in care.

We:

- **SUPPORT** children and young people to find out about children's rights.
- **LISTEN** to children and young people to find out what's important to them.
- **ADVISE** children, young people and those who care for them if they feel they've got nowhere else to go with their problems.
- **INFLUENCE** government and other organisations who say they're going to make a difference to children's lives, making sure they keep their promises.
- **SPEAK UP** for children and young people nationally on important issues – being the children's champion for Wales.

We want to listen

To make sure we work well as a team we want to listen carefully to any complaints you may have about our work. We will handle your complaint in an open and honest way.

Importantly, we will make sure your contact with us in the future is not affected because you've made a complaint.

When to use this leaflet

When you tell us about your complaint there are different ways we will respond. You can read all about this on page 4 and 5 of this leaflet. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us and we will give advice about who could help with your complaint.

What if I need help

We will help you to share your complaint with us. We will ask you how you would like us to contact you and check whether you have any particular needs e.g. if you have a disability. If you need extra help, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help.

Have you asked us yet

If you have asked us for support and then are not happy with our actions, you will be able to make your complaint known by following the steps we describe overleaf.

We think it's best to look into your complaint while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind. That's why we sometimes can't look at something that happened more than 12 months ago.

We may be able to look at complaints which are made later than this if you explain why you have not been able to tell us about it earlier. We will not be able to look at any complaints that happened more than two years ago.

If you're making a complaint for someone else we'll need to make sure that they agree to this.

Putting Things Right

If we didn't do something we should have done, we'll aim to do it now if that's possible. If we didn't do something well, we'll aim to put it right.



	What you need to do:	What we will do:
<p>Step 1</p> <p>You are unhappy with something and have a complaint.</p> <p>This is called an Informal Complaint</p>	<p>Share your complaint with the person you are dealing with.</p>	<p>Try to sort it out with you straight away.</p>
<p>Step 2</p> <p>You have made an informal complaint and are still not happy with the solution.</p> <p>This is called a Formal Complaint</p>	<p>Fill in the form at the back of this leaflet – or call us with your complaint. You will be asked specific questions which will help you think about what you want to say.</p> <p>Read page 5 of this leaflet for things that you may want to think about.</p>	<p>We will let you know within 5 work days that we have received your complaint.</p> <p>Offer to meet with you, share with you our understanding of your complaint and check with you that we've got it right.</p> <p>Explore the facts, look into it and get back to you.</p> <p>Try and sort out your complaint in 15 work days.</p> <p>Offer a solution to your problem and ask you if you're happy to accept this.</p> <p>In more serious cases we will ask an independent reviewer to look at your complaint.</p>
<p>Taking your complaint outside the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales</p>		
<p>Step 3</p> <p>You have made a formal complaint and are still not happy with the solution.</p> <p>This is called an External Review of Complaint.</p>	<p>Write to or speak to the Chair of the Commissioner's Advisory Panel (see page 5).</p> <p>Tell us if you need help at this stage.</p>	<p>We can tell you how to contact other independent organisations if you need help with making your complain.</p> <p>We will send files and information to the Chair of the Advisory Panel if they ask for them.</p> <p>We will respond to the report from the Chair of the Advisory Panel.</p> <p>We will apologise if we have got something wrong and learn lessons from our mistakes.</p>

Step 1

An informal complaint

If possible, we believe it's best to deal with things straight away rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a complaint, then try to talk about it with the member of staff who you have been dealing with. He or she will try to sort it out for you there and then. If there are any lessons to learn from discussing and sorting out your complaint then the member of staff will discuss them with the Head of Communications and Performance who is also our Complaints Officer.

If the member of staff can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

Step 2

A formal complaint

You can make a formal complaint by:

 Phoning the Head of Corporate Services on: **01792 765600** or freephone: **0808 801 1000**.

 Talking to the person you are in contact with and ask for a copy of our form.

 Filling in the form on our website at: **www.childcomwales.org.uk** and return it via email or post (see details below).

 Filling in the form at the back of this leaflet*.

 Email: **post@childcomwales.org.uk**

 Writing to us at:
**Children's Commissioner for Wales,
 Freepost RRGL XLYC BHGC,
 Swansea, SA7 9FS**

Step 3

External Review of Complaint

If you are still not happy with the solution to your complaint, you may complain to the Chair of the Commissioner's Advisory Panel. The Chair of the Commissioner's Advisory Panel also chairs a subcommittee of the Panel with specific responsibilities over complaints. Members of the panel are independent, and are not members of staff at the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

The Chair and the sub-committee can look into your complaint if you think you've been treated unfairly or received a poor service from us.

The Chair and sub-committee expect you to bring your complaint to our attention first and give us a chance to put things right.

You can contact the Chair at:
**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL,
 Chair of Commissioner's Advisory Panel,
 Children's Commissioner for Wales,
 Oystermouth House,
 Charter Court, Phoenix Way,
 Llansamlet, Swansea SA7 9FS**

There are also other organisations that consider complaints, for example, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, about public services. We can tell you about such organisations.

* The form is available in Welsh and English, in other languages as well, and in audio version or large print.

We will let you know we have received your complaint within 5 work days and we will:

- Ask you how you want us to communicate with you.
- Tell you who we have asked to look into your complaint.
- Establish the facts, look into it and get back to you.
- Appoint an independent reviewer in more serious cases.
- Share with you our understanding of your complaint, check with you that we've got it right.
- Ask you if you are happy for us to look at any files about the case.
- Ask you what outcome you're hoping for.
- Offer a solution to your complaint and ask you if you're happy to accept this.
- Try and resolve your complaint in 15 work days.

If your complaint is complicated and likely to take longer than 15 days to sort out we will:

- Put together an action plan.
- Let you know why we think it may take longer to investigate and tell you how long.
- Sometimes meet with you to discuss the complaint.
- Look at files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or anything else that might help.
- Talk to staff or others involved.
- Let you know where we have reached with the action plan and give you regular updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original plan.

Outcome

When we look into your complaint, we will let you know what we have found. This could be by letter or e-mail, for example. We'll explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we'll tell you what and why it happened. We'll show how the mistake affected you. If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things we'll tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again. If we got it wrong, we will always say sorry.

Learning lessons

We take your complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made. Our management team discusses a summary of all complaints every 6 months as well as details of any serious complaints. Our Audit Committee also discusses our response to complaints at least twice a year.

Where there is a need for us to change something, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it by. We will let you know when changes we've promised have been made.



Children's Commissioner for Wales Complaint form (See Step 2)

If you need extra help with this form tell us and we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help.

When you have completed this form, please send it to:

**Complaints Officer, Children's Commissioner for Wales,
Oystermouth House, Phoenix Way, Llansamlet, Swansea, SA7 9FS**

A: Your details

Surname:	
Forename(s):	
Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/ if other please state:	
Address and postcode:	
E-mail address:	
Daytime contact number:	
Mobile number:	
Please state by which of the above methods you would prefer us to contact you:	

Your requirements: if our usual way of dealing with complaints makes it difficult for you to use this form, for example, if English or Welsh is not your first language or you need to engage with us in a particular way, please tell us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in your details in section A and their details in section B. Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to satisfy ourselves that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

B: Making a complaint on behalf of someone else: Their details

Their name in full:	
Address and postcode:	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	



C: About your complaint (please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet(s) if necessary)

C1. What do you think we did wrong, or failed to do?

C2. Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected.

C3. What do you think should be done to put things right?

C4. When did you first become aware of the problem?

**C5. Have you already put your complaint to the Officer responsible for delivering the work?
If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so.**

**C6. If it's more than 12 months since you became first aware of the problem,
please give the reason why you have not complained before now.**

If you have any documents to support your complaint, please attach them with this form.

Signature:

Date:

