

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

We aim to provide the highest standards of work and service and to resolve any concerns about us as quickly as possible. However, if we cannot do so and you wish to make a **Complaint**, the information here explains how we will investigate and respond to your concerns.

First contact

When you email the Children's Commissioner's Office [OCC] with a query, question or observation we aim to resolve any concerns about us quickly and satisfactorily. This provides an opportunity to clarify any misunderstanding or to resolve matters of concern quickly and informally.

Step 1: Informal Complaint

If we are unable to resolve your concerns, you can raise a complaint with us. We will deal with this initially as an **Informal Complaint**. We will respond to you as soon as possible, and would aim to respond within 2 weeks.

If you have a question relating to the response, but no longer see it as a complaint that too may be resolved informally.

If you are dissatisfied with our initial response to your complaint and you wish to progress to making a **Formal Complaint**, you should follow these steps.

Disagreeing with an official opinion expressed by the Commissioner or her Office is not grounds for making a complaint.

Step 2: Formal Complaint - What you need to tell us

You will need to **mark** the correspondence clearly as "**Formal Complaint**"

You will **need to show** where in our initial informal response you feel we have failed to give you an adequate response to your initial inquiry and tell us what you want to happen.

Formal complaints can be sent in hard copy or by email. We cannot offer office appointments for formal complaints to be made in person.

The postal address for complaints is:

The Children's Commissioner's Office
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

The email address for complaints is: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
Please put 'Formal complaint' in the subject line.

Formal Complaint - Stage 1

We will **acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days** and allocate a staff member to handle it. That person will send a **reply to your complaint within 20 working days**. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, we will send a progress report with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

The response will describe what has been done to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

If we are unable to take your complaint forward, we will let you know and provide you with the reasons why.

Formal Complaint - Stage 2

If you still do not feel that the problem has been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, you may ask for the complaint to be reviewed by a relevant senior officer.

We will **acknowledge this request within 5 working days** of receiving it.

You **will receive a response within 20 working days**, setting out the conclusions from the review, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is **the final stage of our complaints procedure**. OCC will not engage in further correspondence on the matter.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the review, you can refer your concerns to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. Details of the process for submitting concerns to the Ombudsman can be found at: www.ombudsman.org.uk