

# compliments comments complaints

*Regarding Children's Services for*

- Social workers
- Residential homes
- Adoption



## Introduction

Birmingham City Council is committed to putting people first. We are always working hard to improve the services we provide. If you use Children's services, you may want to make a comment, compliment or complaint. If so, this leaflet tells you how to do this.

### **Equal Opportunities**

It is your right to be treated fairly, respectfully and with dignity when making a complaint, regardless of your racial identity, sexuality, disability, age, culture, religion, gender or status.

### **Comments and Compliments**

When monitoring the quality of the services we provide, it is also important for us to know about things that are going well or how the service can be improved. It is good to be able to give staff positive feedback.

### **Who Can Complain?**

You can complain if you are a user of a service, or feel you have a right to a service from the directorate, or if you are a carer or a representative acting on the Service user's behalf.

## What can I complain about?

- lack of service
- refusal of service
- delay in receiving a service
- the conduct or attitude of staff
- a decision by a member of staff or panel
- lack of involvement in decision making processes or any other aspect of social care.
- issues around assessment

The Human Rights Act 1998 places a duty on the local authority to ensure that complainants have the right to a fair hearing. The directorate is committed to fair and equal access to all its service users.

**Your views are important; you can help us to do things better.**



## The complaint process

### Mediation

Mediation is a method used to help complaints to be resolved quickly. It can be used at any stage of the complaints process. It is a process where the complainant meets with an officer of the service that they are complaining about to discuss the issues of concern. This is organised by the Customer Relations Service. See back page for contact details.

### Stage One – Problem Solving/Mediation

If you are unhappy with the services provided by the directorate you should talk to your social worker, key worker, foster carer, manager of the service concerned, an adult you trust or complete the form in this leaflet.

## What to do if you want to make a formal complaint

### Stage Two – Independent Investigation/Mediation

When you have talked things over, you may be satisfied with the outcome or stage 1 response. If not, you may want to take it further by making a formal complaint or attending a mediation meeting.

If you do, you should:

- Tell the manager that you want to make a formal complaint  
or
- Complete the form in this leaflet (if you have not already done so)  
or
- Contact the Customer Relations Service. See back page for contact details.

You should receive an acknowledgement to your complaint within two working days.

An Independent Investigation Officer will investigate your complaint. Also, an independent person will be appointed who will oversee how the investigation officer undertakes their investigation.

# Making a compliment, comment or complaint

You can make a compliment, comment or complain about:

- children and young people's social workers;
- children and young people's residential homes; and
- adoption services

by visiting [www.birmingham.gov.uk](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk) and completing an online form.

If you do not have access to a computer you can complete this form (pages 5-8 of this leaflet) and then pull out and return using the Freepost envelope provided in this leaflet. You do not need to use a stamp.

If you do not have a Freepost envelope included in this leaflet please contact us and we will send you one.

Phone: 0121 303 5161 - select Option 2.

Opening hours:  
Monday to Thursday 8.45am - 5.15pm  
and Friday 8.45am - 4.15pm.



## Comments, Compliments or Complaints Form

Note: All personal data is collected and processed in compliance with the principles of the 1998 Data Protection Act and you have certain rights in respect of this information.

This form should only be completed if you wish to register a comment, compliment or Stage 1/Stage 2 complaint.

(Please tick boxes where appropriate).

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone, please provide us with their name and address:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To assist us in measuring our service quality for all user groups, please help us by providing the following information:

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Language: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_ Racial Identity: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: Male  Female

Disability:    Yes       No  

Nature of - Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

I want to make a comment:

I want to give a compliment:

I want to make a Stage One Complaint:

I want to make a Stage Two Complaint:

My comment, compliment or complaint is about:

**Please see over then page 5 for details on how to return this form to the Directorate For People.**

## Desired outcomes:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **The outcome of your complaint**

You will receive a copy of the independent investigation officer's report and a letter of response within 25 - 65 working days from the senior manager concerned. You will be notified of any delays.

### **What to do if you are unhappy with the outcome**

You should first contact the person who sent you the letter to try to sort the matter out. This process is known as problem solving. If you are still unhappy, you have the right to ask for your complaint to be looked at by an Independent Review Panel of three people. This can be arranged if you contact the Customer Relations Service within 20 working days of receiving the Directorate's response to your complaint.

### **Stage Three – The Review**

The Independent Review Panel will look at the way your complaint has been dealt with by the directorate. You will have the chance to express your views. The panel members will be independent of the directorate. You will be sent the relevant information before the Review. You can also speak to the Customer Relations Manager if anything is unclear.

### **The outcome of the review**

You will be sent a copy of the Review Panel's report, within 5 working days.

The service or Assistant Director will write to you within 15 working days with a response and a copy of the Review Panel Report. At the end of this process, if you are still dissatisfied, you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman (leaflets are available from the Customer Relations Service).

## Help and support that is available to you

It is important that you can get support from outside of the directorate. The Customer Relations Service can arrange for an independent advocate to assist you. This service is free of charge if you are a child or are unable to present your views either in writing or verbally. The role of the independent advocate is to promote and protect your rights and interests.

**You can also talk to an advocate from the Rights and Participation Service on 0121 303 7217.**

Referrals can be sent to:- [advocacy@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:advocacy@birmingham.gov.uk)

For:- children in care (section 20)  
care leavers  
children subject to child protection plans

### **Interpreters**

Complainants whose first language is not English can be provided with an interpreter through an independent agency. This service is free of charge if you need it.

### **Friends or relatives**

Friends or relatives can complain on behalf of a service user. They should inform the service user or carer before making a complaint on their behalf. The Customer Relations Service will always check out consent where the complaint is not received directly from the service user.

## Directorate for People

Staff have a responsibility to assist any service user, carer or representatives to make a complaint, particularly vulnerable users of residential and day care services.

### **Solicitors**

Some complainants may use a solicitor when making a complaint. Where complainants have chosen to do this, the Customer Relations Service will correspond directly with the solicitor.

### **Councillors and MPs**

Councillors and MPs sometimes complain on behalf of their constituents. These complaints are usually processed in the normal way. However, councillors and MPs' enquiries on behalf of their constituents are not dealt with as a complaint.

### **Access to records**

The Data Protection Act 1998 gives you the right to see information that we hold about you. You can only see information about another person if they agree. You can contact the following person:-

Steve Cullen  
Information Governance Manager  
Governance and Policy Team  
Directorate for People  
Birmingham City Council  
PO Box 16568  
10 Woodcock Street  
Birmingham B7 4BL

Tel: 0121 464 4591

Email: [steve.cullen@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:steve.cullen@birmingham.gov.uk)

## Further Information



Customer Relations Service  
Directorate For People  
Room 311, Council House Extension,  
6 Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BU

Tel: 0121 303 5161, option 2 (answer machine service available)

Email: [cypfsscuserrelations@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:cypfsscuserrelations@birmingham.gov.uk)

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/childrenservices](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/childrenservices)  
(we want to hear your views on children's social care)

Opening hours:- Mon-Thur 8:45am - 5:15pm  
Fri 8:45am - 4:15pm

## Useful Contacts

Rights and Participation Service      0121 303 7217

Childline – 24 hour advice      0800 1111

City Councillor or MP – ask for the name, address and advice surgery times at your local neighbourhood office or library.

Lawyer – ask a rights & participation officer or any of the organisations listed above.

If you need the information in this leaflet in a different format or language, contact the Customer Relation Service.