Feedback Leaflet for Children’s Services

Children, Families and Adult Services

Reviewed Date: April 2017
FEEDBACK

Cambridgeshire County Council’s Children’s Services welcomes feedback. It gives us an opportunity to improve our service. The Customer Care Team receives compliments, comments and complaints and makes sure that all our staff are told about the lessons that come from your feedback.

We are keen to know what we do well so we can continue to act in that way. When we receive complaints, we will do whatever we can to resolve your particular issue quickly and efficiently, while also considering how we can make our service even better.

Who can make comments or complaint?

Anyone who is or who has received a service can tell us about it, either on their own behalf or on the behalf of a child or young person.

Sometimes an advocate will contact us on behalf of a young person or an adult and sometimes we put people in touch with an advocate if they would like help in telling us about our service.

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) are independent of the Local Authority and they have a particular role in helping children and young people. Their service is free. Their contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

How can I make a complaint?

You can do this in a number of ways, including speaking directly to one of our staff, completing our on-line form or ringing, writing or e-mailing the Customer Care Team. The Customer Care Team can also receive text messages. If you prefer, you can use this leaflet and send it to us using FREEPOST.

The link for the on-line form is: http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/complain

All complaints are passed to the Customer Care Team, regardless of how they arrive.
What can I complain about?

This is, of course, up to you but it does need to link to a service we provide to children and families and it does need to be about something that happened in the last 12 months. If it was longer ago than this, we will only be able to consider it if there is a reason why you could not have complained sooner.

We will not be able to deal with a complaint that has already been made and where a response has already been given. Similarly, we cannot deal with a complaint about an issue decided at a Panel and where there is a separate appeals process.

The complaint process cannot change a decision made by a court, nor can it deal with matters which the complainant raised in court as part of the proceedings. It also cannot change a decision made to undertake a Child Protection investigation; to hold a Child Protection Conference or a decision made at Conference.

What can I expect from the Complaint Process?

The Customer Care Team will send you a letter within 3 working days to tell you that your complaint has been received.

The Customer Care Manager will look at your complaint and may contact you to check the details. Your complaint will then be passed to the Manager most closely linked to the situation so they can investigate and write back to you.

Sometimes the Manager will contact you by telephone or invite you to a meeting, especially if the situation is complex. However you will always be sent a letter within 10 working days of the complaint being received. If there is a meeting, you should expect a letter within 10 working days of the meeting. Occasionally, there are reasons why a reply may need to take slightly longer but you will be told about this and you should always receive a reply within 20 working days.

We will always apologise when we have made a mistake.
You will be sent a feedback form with the response letter and you are invited to give us any comments. These will always be read by the Customer Care Manager, who will contact you if there are any queries or anything that you are still unhappy about.

**What happens if I am still unhappy?**

All complainants have access to a 3 Stage complaint process but we hope to be able to resolve your concerns at Stage 1 if at all possible. The Customer Care Manager will try to help. This might be by arranging for you to meet one or more of our staff or by sending you further information. This is usually the best and quickest way forward.

However, if you request that the complaint is considered at Stage 2 of our complaint procedure, the Customer Care Manager will talk to you about what aspects of the complaint you wish to take forward and what you hope will be the outcome. This will need to be written down and agreed, as it will form the basis of the investigation.

**Corporate Complaints at Stages 2 and 3**

If the service you are complaining about is not Children’s Social Care, your Stage 2 complaint will be passed to a more Senior Manager to review and if you remain unhappy, it could then be forwarded to the Director of Customer Service and Transformation for a final review, on behalf of our Chief Executive. This is Stage 3 and is the final stage of our Corporate Complaint Procedure. We would hope to send the response to you within 10 working days of your request for Stage 2 or 3.

**Children’s Social Care Complaints at Stages 2 and 3**

Stage 2 complaints about Children’s Social Care involve the appointment of two Independent People. They have slightly different roles which will be explained to you in more detail if you decide to follow this process. As soon as you have signed a written record, called the ‘Schedule of Complaint’, the investigation will start and reports will usually be written within 25 working days from the date of your signature. You will be told if there is likely to be any delay.
You will need to give written consent to them reading the records and talking to members of staff about your situation. They can only investigate something that has already been considered at Stage 1.

Two separate reports are written and both are sent to the Service Director for Children’s Services. The Service Director has 20 working days to read the reports and to write to you. The full reports will usually be enclosed with the letter. You will not see the reports before this. You then have a further 20 working days to provide us with any feedback. Your feedback should be sent to the Customer Care Team.

If you remain unhappy, we will try to resolve the situation but if you want to go to Stage 3, we will set up a Panel of three new Independent People. The role of the Panel is to look at the original complaint and the response, together with the Stage 2 reports and letter from the Service Director. The Panel considers whether the complaint has been thoroughly and fairly investigated and whether the Local Authority has done all it could to remedy the situation. It is not a new investigation of the case although you will have a chance to come to the Panel to explain why you are still unhappy. Further details about Stage 3 will be provided to you if you wish to proceed with this part of the complaint procedure.

But I am still unhappy. Who else can I turn to?

The Government has appointed someone called the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) who can look at complaints about Local Authorities. The LGO is completely independent from the Council. The LGO usually wants to know that a complaint has been through all three Stages of the Complaint procedure before they become involved but it is a service that can provide advice whenever you feel you need it. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

If you have any questions about the content of this leaflet, please contact the Customer Care Team for advice.
Useful contact details

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – Customer Care Team
Children’s Services
FREEPOST Box SH1215
Shire Hall
Cambridge
CB3 0AP

Telephone: 01223 699 664 or 714 765 (or 0345 045 5203)
Text: 07795 092 404
Email: Childrens.ServicesFeedback@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Website: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

*Remember NYAS support is free*
Unit AA The Anderson Centre
Ermine Business Park
Spitfire Close
Huntingdon
PE29 6XY

Telephone: 0808 808 1001 (This is a Freephone number from landlines. Calls from mobiles may be chargeable).
Text: 0743 596 7405
Email: help@nyas.net
Website: www.nyas.net

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN (LGO)
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614 (Calls to 03 numbers will cost no more than calls to national geographic numbers starting 01 or 02).
Website: www.lgo.org.uk
Fax: 024 7682 0001
Text: ‘call back’ to 0762 480 4299
FEEDBACK

Please give this form to the Manager responsible for the Service you receive
OR send it to the Customer Care Team

Service User’s Name …………………………………………………………………………..

Date of birth (if 18 or under) ……………………………………………………………

Address …………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………

Post Code ………………………………………………………………………………

Phone Number …………………………………………………………………………

If you are writing on someone’s behalf

Your Name …………………………………………………………………………………

Relationship to the Service User ……………………………………………………

Your Address ……………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………

Post Code ………………………………………………………………………………

Phone Number …………………………………………………………………………

I wish to make a (please tick):

Positive Comment  Comment  Complaint

Which part of the service do you want to comment on and what, if anything, would you want to change? Please give us details (If there is not enough room here, please use a separate piece of paper and attach to this form)

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………………………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………………….

Signed: ……………………………………………… Date: ……………………………
The Customer Care Manager
Children’s Services Feedback
FREEPOST
SH1215
Shire Hall
Cambridge
CB3 0AP