

Social Services

Complaints policy - information leaflet

A Guide to Stage 2
(Formal Investigation)



April 2023

SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS POLICY - INFORMATION LEAFLET

A Guide to Stage 2 (Formal Investigation)

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh

RELATES TO (POLICY)	Social Services Complaints Policy
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STAGE 2 (FORMAL INVESTIGATION)

A Stage 2 formal investigation takes place if:

- You remain unhappy after a Manager from Social Services has responded to your complaint at Stage 1.
- You have insisted upon your right to progress your complaint straight to this stage and therefore by-passing Stage 1.
- Social Services has progressed the matter to this stage because of the complexity or seriousness of the issues raised.

What is a Stage 2 (Formal Investigation)?

At Stage 1, a Manager from Social Services will have looked into your complaint and responded with their findings. This was Social Services' opportunity to put things right if things have gone wrong or, if the correct processes have indeed been followed, this will have been explained to you.

A Stage 2 formal investigation is an investigation commissioned by the Complaints Officer to **independently** look into the issues you have raised. An Independent Investigator will be appointed. They do not work for Flintshire County Council, but they have a social care background and experience of investigating complaints.

You have the right to be supported by an Advocate during this stage (if you used an Advocate at Stage 1, they will be expected to continue their support with you).

What happens during a Stage 2?

The Complaints Officer will clarify with you either in person or over the telephone what you are unhappy with and the outcomes you are seeking. This discussion will happen within 5 working days of you making such a request. You will receive a record of this discussion and have the opportunity to comment upon its accuracy.

What is the Independent Investigator's role?

- Investigate your complaint by a fact-finding exercise which is impartial, open and proportionate to the seriousness of the complaint.
- Read relevant case records held by Social Services and interview managers or staff involved in the complaint.
- Produce a report into their findings and make constructive, proportionate and achievable recommendations.

Complaints specifically about Children's Social Services will also include an Independent Person. Their role is to:

Take part in the investigation and ensure that it is fair and unbiased, and that everyone involved is able to express their views fully and without any pressure.

Oversee the Independent Investigator's report and confirm that it provides an accurate and complete picture of the handling of the Complaint.

What happens after a Stage 2 is finished?

The Independent Investigator's report will be sent to Social Services first for them to consider the findings and recommendations. Social Services will then send you a formal response together with the report. This is normal procedure as set out in the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations.

The investigation and Department's response should be completed within 25 working days of you agreeing to the summary of your complaint with the Investigating Officer.

If for whatever reason the investigation may overrun (e.g. key staff are on leave or there are a significant number of issues to investigate), you will be informed of this by the Complaints Officer together with an expected completion date. We believe it is important for the Investigating Officer to complete a thorough and quality investigation that is not rushed or fails to address the issues raised.

You will have the opportunity to meet with the Complaints Officer and go through the report's findings and the response from Social Services.

The Complaints Officer will add the agreed recommendations to an ongoing 'lessons learned' action plan, the progress of which is reviewed by senior management every quarter and reported to Councillors.

USEFUL CONTACTS

A wide range of voluntary organisations provide independent advice and assistance. Contacting them will give you information on your rights.

Flintshire Citizens advice Bureau	
08444 772020	www.flintshirecab.org.uk
Flintshire Care and Repair Flintshire Care and Repair offer advice on housing repairs, adaptations and benefits for disabled and elderly people.	
01352 758700	www.flintshirecr.co.uk
Age Connects North East Wales	
08450 549969	www.acnew.org.uk
Mencap Cymru Helpline	
0808 808 1111	www.mencap.org.uk/wales
MIND	
01352 757637	www.flintshiremind.org.uk
North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS)	
01352 752525	www.carers.org/local/wales/flintshire
Flintshire Disability Forum	
01352 755546	
Social Services First Contact, Preswylfa, Hendy Road, Mold, Flintshire, CH7 1PZ	
03000 858 858	SSDUTY@flintshire.gov.uk www.flintshire.gov.uk/careinfo

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND REPRESENTATIONS

We are aware that despite our best efforts there may be occasions when you need to make a complaint. Any complaint about the services can be made to your Social Worker, their Team Manager or you can contact:

The Complaints Officer
Social Services
County Hall,
Mold,
Flintshire, CH7 6NN 01352 702623

Email: myview@flintshire.gov.uk

A leaflet 'Your right to compliment and complain' which explains how your comments can be made and how they will be dealt with is available from the same address or online at: www.flintshire.gov.uk/careinfo

A wide range of information on the care and support system in Wales is available online at: www.dewis.wales

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. Cysylltwch a 03000 858 858 i gael fersiwn Gymraeg.

This document is available in Welsh. Please contact 03000 858 858 for a version.

This leaflet is available in alternate formats including Braille and Large Print on request to 03000 858 858.