

Concerns and complaints *Information for young people*

www.hartlepool.gov.uk

If you are a young person who is in touch with Children's Social Care and are unhappy with any part of our service, it is important that you tell someone about it.

Concerns

If you are unhappy or worried about something, try talking to an adult you trust. This could be:

- your mum or dad
- your grandparents
- your foster carer
- your social worker
- a teacher

Talking to someone you trust may help you get things sorted out straight away. If you don't feel that you can talk to anyone about your problem, or if you have talked to someone and you are still unhappy, you can make a **complaint**.

Complaints

If you want to make a complaint, get in touch with our complaints officer. You can do this by telephone, email, filling in our online form or by sending a letter. Our complaints officer's address and telephone number is on page 2 of this factsheet.

When you complain, we will always take your complaint seriously. We will listen to what you have to say. We will treat your complaint **in confidence**: you can trust us to only share what you tell us with people who need to know.

Making your complaint

If you would like to complain you can talk to any member of staff, such as your social worker. You do not have to talk to your social worker about your complaint if you do not want to. You may be happier talking to our complaints officer instead. You can do this by filling in the form on the back of this factsheet, or by:



Telephone:

01429 284020



Email:

fcsh@hartlepool.gov.uk



Filling in the form on our website: www.hartlepool.gov.uk/socialcarecomplaints



Post:

Complaints officer
Child and Adult Services
Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre
Victoria Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

Understanding our complaints procedure

Our **complaints procedure**—the steps we follow when we look into someone’s complaint—has three stages. We normally start with **stage one**.

Stage one

Our complaints officer will arrange for someone—usually a team manager—to talk to you in private. This person will do everything they can to sort out your problem.

You can talk to the team manager on your own, or you can ask a friend or relative to come with you. If you like, we can ask an advocate to help you with your complaint.

An **advocate** is an adult whose job it is to help you get your point across. They will explain any part of the complaints process that you do not understand. The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) will find an advocate for you.



You can contact NYAS for free on telephone 0800 616101, or text 0777 333 4555.

We will respond to your complaint in writing. This should take no longer than 20 working days. If you are not happy with our response or if we take too long to write to you, you can move on to **stage two**.

Stage two

Our complaints officer will arrange for an investigating officer, or IO, to formally investigate your complaint. The IO will not have anything to do with the service you are complaining about. They can work in the department or can be someone external the Council asks to look into the complaint.

As well as an IO, we will appoint an independent person, or IP. They will make sure that the investigation into your complaint is fair and complete.

The IP will not work at the Council or be an elected member (a Councillor) or someone related to them. It is possible that the IP can have worked at the Council before but they must have left at least 3 years ago.

Just as in stage one, you can talk to these people by yourself or with a friend, relative or advocate.

Once the IO and IP have investigated your complaint, you will get a formal reply from the Child and Adult Services department. You will also get a copy of both the IO and IP's reports. This should take no longer than 65 working days.

We hope that after this thorough investigation we will have sorted out your problem. If you are still unhappy you can move on to [stage three](#).

Stage three

At stage three, a group of independent people called a [review panel](#) will ask you to come and meet with them. Three people are on the review panel. The members of the panel will talk to you and the other people involved in trying to help sort out your problem.

The IO and IP from stage two of your complaint will be at the review panel. You can talk to the review panel by yourself or you can take a friend, relative or advocate.

The panel talks to everybody involved in your complaint. They listen carefully to what everyone has to say. Once they have done this, the panel will make a decision about the best way to sort out your complaint. The panel will send you a letter explaining what they have agreed. They should do this no more than 5 working days after the panel. A senior officer from the Child and Adult Services department will write to you in response to the panel's decision. They should do this no more than 15 working days after the panel send their letter.

This is the last stage of our complaints procedure. If you feel your problem is still not fixed, an organisation called the [Local Government Ombudsman](#) may be able to help you.



Telephone: 0300 061 0614



Texting 'call back' to: 07624 804299



Email: advice@lgo.org.uk



Writing to: The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

About this factsheet

This factsheet explains how you can raise a concern or make a complaint about our services. We wrote this factsheet in February 2012 and updated it in November 2014. We will check that it is up to date in November 2016.



You can download all of our factsheets and booklets from our website,
www.hartlepool.gov.uk/childrensfactsheets

You can use this form to send us your concerns, complaints, comments or compliments. When you have filled it in, fold it in half so that our address is on the outside. Fasten the open side with a staple or sticky tape and post the form back to us. You can use more paper if you need to: just make sure it is securely fastened inside. You do not need to use a stamp.

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Your phone number: _____ **Email:** _____

If you are filling in this form for someone else, please tell us:

Their name: _____

Their address: _____

Do they know you are sending this form to us? Yes No

If you are complaining, would you like an advocate? Yes No I'm not sure

Your concern, complaint, comment or compliment:

Your signature: _____ **Date you signed:** _____

Business Reply Plus
Licence Number
RLZC-BXTY-YCCZ



Child & Adult Services
Hartlepool Borough Council
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