

Concerns and complaints *Information for adults*

www.hartlepool.gov.uk

Feedback from our customers is very important to us. It helps us to shape our services. If you are unhappy with any part of our service we would like to hear from you.

Concerns

If something has gone wrong we will do our best to resolve any concerns as quickly as possible. You should always talk to a member of staff involved in the service you are concerned about first of all. They will do all they can to sort out your problem but, if you are still unhappy, you can make a **complaint**.

Making a complaint

If you would like to complain you can talk to any member of staff, such as a 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:

childrenshub@hartlepool.gcsx.gov.uk



Filling in the form on our website:

www.hartlepool.gov.uk/childrensocialcarecomplaints



Post:

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

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.

Advocacy: help to make your complaint

If you are making a complaint, you may choose to use an **advocate**. An advocate is an independent person **who can help you with your complaint**. They will explain any part of the complaints process that you do not understand. You do not have to pay to use an advocate.

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 resolve your complaint.

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 investigating officer, we will appoint an IO, or IP, to your complaint. 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 the IO 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 resolved your complaint. However, if you are still unhappy you can move on to the **stage three**.

Stage three

At stage three, we will arrange a meeting between you and a group of independent people called a **review panel**. The three members of the review panel will talk to you and the other people who have been involved in your complaint.

The IO and IP from stage two of your complaint will be at the review panel. You may attend the review panel meeting 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 resolve 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 sends their letter.

This is the last stage of our complaints procedure. If you feel your complaint has still not been resolved, an organisation called the **Local Government Ombudsman** may be able to help you.

Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) looks at complaints about councils in a fair and independent way. It is a free service. You can get in touch with the LGO by:



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

Contact us

You can contact the Children's Hub by letter, telephone, text or email. If English is not your first language we can provide a translation service.

Our opening times

We open at 8:30am every weekday we close at 5:00pm from Monday to Thursday. On Fridays we close at 4:30pm



Telephone: 01429 284284



Text Service: 60006 (start your text with HBC)



Email: childrenshub@hartlepool.gcsx.gov.uk



Post: Child and Adult Services
Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre
Victoria Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

About this factsheet

This factsheet explains how you can raise a concern or make a complaint about our services. We wrote this factsheet in April 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 comments, compliments, concerns or complaints.

Please continue on a separate sheet if you need more space.

When you are ready to post this form, please fold it in half and secure the page(s) so that our address shows on the outside. Alternatively, you can hand this form in to any council office.

■ Your name: _____

■ Your address: _____

■ Telephone: _____

■ email address: _____

■ This is a: comment compliment concern complaint

If you are sending this form on someone else's behalf, please tell us:

■ Their name: _____

■ Their address: _____

■ Do they know you are sending this form on their behalf? Yes No

■ If you are making a complaint, would you like to speak to an advocate? Yes No

An advocate is someone who can help you get your point across. They will explain any part of the complaints process you do not understand. You do not have to pay to use an advocate.

■ What would you like to tell us? If there is anything you would like to happen as a result of you sending this form to us, please tell us that, too.

■ Signed: _____

■ Date: _____

Business Reply Plus
Licence Number
RLZC-BXTY-YCCZ



Child & Adult Services
Hartlepool Borough Council
Victoria Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY