

Local Government Ombudsman

You have the right to contact the Local Government Ombudsman at any time if you are unhappy with the process. However, the Ombudsman would normally expect the Council to complete the complaints process before becoming involved.

You can contact the Local Government Ombudsman at:
Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0845 602 1983 or 024 7682 1960
Fax: 024 7682 0001
Email: advice@lgo.org.uk
Web: www.lgo.org.uk

Children's Complaints Team

We hope this information is helpful to you but if you have any queries or would like more information please contact the Children's Complaints Team who will be happy to help.

Contact us at:
Children's Services Complaints Manager,
Information Compliance
Town Hall,
Castle Circus,
Torquay
TQ1 3DR
Telephone: 01803 207971
Email: complaints@torbay.gov.uk
Web: www.torbay.gov.uk/complaints

This document can be made available in a range of languages, on tape, in Braille, large print and in other formats. For further information please contact 01803 207467.



How to raise concerns or make a complaint about Children's Services Social Care



We aim to provide the best possible support and care for children, young people and their families who need our help. We believe everyone has the right to express their views and raise concerns. Providing your views will help us to shape and improve the services we deliver.

We hope that most things that you are concerned or unhappy about can be resolved easily and quickly. The first step is to talk about the problem with the person you normally talk to or their manager, but if you would like to speak to someone different, you can talk to the Children's Services Complaints Manager.

Who can make a complaint?

Children, their parents, foster carers and people with parental responsibility can complain. Complaints from other people may be accepted if we think the person has a central interest in the child's welfare.

Complaints from Children or Young People

If you are a child or Young Person making a complaint you are entitled to be supported by an advocate. An advocate is someone not employed by Torbay Council who will listen to you and speak, if you wish, on your behalf. Children's Rights Torbay provides this service. If you wish to know more about this service please contact the Children's Complaints Team or Children's Right Torbay direct on 01803 668080

How can I make a complaint?

If Children's Services have been unable to resolve your concerns, you have the right to make a formal complaint. A complaint can be made by email, in person, by phone, by letter or by using our online complaints form available at www.torbay.gov.uk/complaints. Alternatively, you can fill in the form included with this leaflet.

What will happen next?

There are three stages to the Children's Social Care complaints procedures but we try to sort out most problems as quickly and easily as possible. The stages are based on Government Legislation.

Stage one

The service manager responsible for your case will look into the issues you have raised. He/she will review case notes and speak to any staff involved.

He/she will write to you to tell you what they have found and what actions they intend to take. They will try to respond in 10 working days but if this is not possible we may ask you if we can extend the deadline to 20 working days.

Stage two

If you are unhappy with the response you receive at stage one you can ask for your complaint to be considered at stage two. You should ask for this within 20 working days of receiving the stage one response.

Stage two involves a formal investigation being carried out. The investigation will be carried out by someone independent of the service you are complaining about, this may be an employee of Torbay Council or an external investigating officer. An independent person, not employed by Torbay Council, will also be appointed to ensure that your complaint is fully and fairly investigated.

You should receive a response within 25 working days, but sometimes, due to the complexity and/or availability of key staff this may be extended to a maximum of 65 working days.

Stage three

If, following the stage two investigation, you are still unhappy with our response you have 20 working days to ask for it to be reviewed. The review will be carried out by a panel of three independent people not employed by Torbay Council. They will review your complaint to ensure that it has been considered correctly. You will be able to attend the hearing of the review panel. The panel's findings and recommendations will be sent to you along with the Director of Children's Services response.