



Northamptonshire
County Council



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE



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Children & Young People’s Services – Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure

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1. Introduction

It is our aim that all children within the County are safe and that each of them has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. We are committed to delivering a high quality service to children, young people and their families.

However, sometimes we don't get things right first time or you might feel that we could have given you a better service. This document sets out our procedure for managing customer feedback received in relation to Children and Young People's services.

We welcome everything you have to tell us, both 'the good bits' and the 'bad bits', so that we can continue to learn and improve.

Making a complaint should not affect the service you are currently receiving from us or our communications with you.

2. Purpose and scope of this policy

The Children's Act 1989 places a statutory duty on all councils to establish and publicise a procedure for the consideration of complaints and representations made about services provided under the Act. This has been further strengthened by the new regulations issued in 2006. You can view a full copy of the legislation [here](#)

The purpose of this document is to set out our customer feedback policy and associated procedures in relation to Children and Young people's services so you know what to expect if you contact us to provide feedback.

This document will:

- define what representations, complaints, compliments and comments are
- explain how you can contact the Council if you wish to make a complaint, compliment or comment/suggestion
- detail the processes that we will follow to resolve a complaint and the standard of service you can expect to receive
- set out how we will monitor complaints and use the information to improve the services that we provide

This policy applies to the provision of children's social services by and on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council, including the process of Child Protection Conferences. If your complaint falls outside this remit, it may be covered by the

Council's Corporate Complaints Policy for non-statutory services. A copy of which can be found [here](#)

3. Our key principles

Our key principles for dealing with all customer feedback relating to Children and Young People's Services are:

A customer or others acting on their behalf has a right to:

- Complain
- Be listened to
- Have their complaint investigated and resolved as quickly as possible
- Have their concerns taken seriously

Our procedure is designed to:-

- Be accessible and uncomplicated
- Promote customer satisfaction
- Identify areas where services can be improved
- Learn from good practice
- Learn from mistakes
- Implement improvements in processes and procedures

4. Types of customer feedback

There are four types of customer feedback which we are likely to receive in relation to Children and Young People's services.

- Representations
- Complaints
- Compliments
- Comments/suggestions

Representations

A representation is a 'minor' issue you may have about a service that can be quickly be resolved within a short period (normally 48 hours)

Complaints

A complaint is something that the Council or our staff may have done or not done that has caused you to be unhappy with our service. Our definition of a complaint is detailed below;

‘A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet with the quality of a service or with a failure to provide a previously agreed service, or with the attitude or behaviour of a member of staff’.

Some examples of why you may complain might be:

- a ‘problem that hasn’t been sorted out’
- a member of staff has been rude to you
- we have not done something that we said we would
- we have taken too long to make a decision or provide a service
- we have given poor advice
- we have not treated you fairly
- you are unhappy about a change we have made

Compliments

A compliment is an expression of praise. It is a positive statement about a service provided by or on behalf of the Council, or about the helpfulness, attitude or approach of a member of staff.

Comments/Suggestions

A comment is a general statement about a Council service or policy, that affects all customers not just one individual. A comment can be negative or positive or it might make a suggestion for a new service or an improvement to an existing service.

5. Who can complaint under this procedure?

- Any child or young person (or their parent or someone who has parental responsibility) who is being looked after by the local authority or is not looked after by them but is in need;
- Any local authority foster carer (including those caring for children placed through independent fostering agencies);
- Children leaving care;
- Special Guardians;
- A child or young person (or their parent) to whom a Special Guardian order is in force;
- Any person who has applied for an assessment under section 14F(3) or (4) of the Care Act;

- Any child or young person who may be adopted, their parents and guardians;
- Persons wishing to adopt a child;
- Any other person whom arrangements for the provision of adoption services extend to;
- Adopted persons, their parents, natural parents and former guardians; and such other person as the local authority consider has sufficient interest in the child or young person's welfare to warrant his representations being considered by them.

Where a representative makes a complaint on behalf of a customer, the Local Authority must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the complaint to be made by the representative.

Any decision that a complainant is not a qualifying complainant will be made by the Complaints Manager, in consultation with the appropriate Service Manager, and the complainant informed in writing. See section on '**Data Protection and Confidentiality**'

Complaints relating to a child

Where eligibility is not automatic, the Council has the discretion to decide whether or not an individual has sufficient interest in the child's welfare to justify raising a complaint. In reaching a decision, the Complaints Manager Team will check with the child or young person (subject to their age and understanding) that they are content for the complaint to be made.

Complaints made on behalf of a child

Subject to the child/young person's understanding, the Council will always confirm whether the complaint is being made on their behalf and that the complaint submitted reflects their views. Where a complaint is received from a representative acting on behalf of someone in these circumstances, the Council has the discretion to decide whether or not the person is suitable to act as a representative or has sufficient interest in the individual's welfare.

If the Complaints Manager considers that the representative is unsuitable or does not have sufficient interest, they must notify the complainant in writing, explaining that no further action will be taken. The Complaints Manager should discuss this decision with relevant operational managers as appropriate.

Complaints made by a child or young person

The Local Authority takes complaints made by children and young people very seriously. The 'Voice of the Child' is monitored throughout all complaints

If you are a child or young person and you have a Northamptonshire social worker or you are a care leaver, you can contact the Children's Rights Service and request an advocate.

This can be done by you or on your behalf by a social worker, foster carer, teacher or anyone who knows you. Children's Rights Advocacy Service contact details:

- **Telephone:** 01604 368051
- **Email:** childrensrights@northamptonshire.gov.uk
- To find out more about Children's Rights and to access the online form [click here](#)

6. How to contact us with your feedback

You can make a complaint or compliment or offer a comment or suggestion to any member of staff at the Council OR by contacting the Complaints and Compliments Team directly.

If your feedback relates to a complaint, and you feel comfortable doing so, try and speak to the member of staff you have been dealing with directly, or their Manager, in the first instance. This enables the opportunity for the complaint to be resolved straight away. If you are unsure of who you need to speak to you should contact the Council's Complaints and Compliments Team.

Telephone: Complaints and Compliments Team on **0300 126 1000**

Email: complaints@northamptonshire.gov.uk
compliments@northamptonshire.gov.uk

In writing to: The Complaints and Compliments Team
One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

Via our website: www.northamptonshire.gov.uk.

Via your local County Councillor: By contacting your local County Councillor – Find your Councillor [here](#)

In addition, any complaint, compliment or comment can also be made or handed in at any of the Council's offices.

Advocacy and Support

If you need help to give your feedback or would like support whilst the matter is being looked into for you, then we will be happy to put you in touch with someone locally who can offer independent advice and guidance and will help you to make sure that your views are represented.

Anonymous Feedback:

Any anonymous feedback received will be recorded and acted upon. However, it is helpful if contact details are provided in order that we can inform you what has been done. There is no need for you to share your personal details if you do not feel comfortable doing so.

7. Our Complaints Procedure

We recognise that occasionally things can go wrong. In these circumstances we want to make it as simple and quick as possible for you to raise concerns with us. We will learn from your feedback and try to improve so that the situation does not arise again.

Our Children and Young People's customer feedback procedure has four stages – one informal stage and three formal stages. In addition, there is also the Local Government Ombudsman should our formal procedure be exhausted. The process is there to support complainants and staff to reach a satisfactory resolution to any complaint.

The four stages within our process are:

Informal	Representations	
Formal	Stage 1: Local Resolution Stage 2: Formal Investigation Stage 3: Review Panel meeting	Local Government Ombudsman

A flow chart showing the process is set out in **Appendix 1**.

Representations

If you have an issue or want to share a problem you are experiencing, but do not wish to make a formal complaint, you can make a Representation to inform us of any concerns you have. Representations can be made to any member of staff but are best directed to the team which the issue relates to deal with the matter at the first point of contact.

If we receive a Representation we will investigate your issue and try and resolve it within **2 working days (48hrs)**. All staff are encouraged to use their initiative to deal with and resolve issues informally, efficiently and effectively for the benefit both of service users and the service.

All staff receiving Representations are asked to record them so that we can monitor feedback which assists the Council in its future planning and development of services.

Stage 1: Local Resolution

If you feel that your issue has not been resolved by making an 'informal' Representation, or you wish to make a 'formal' complaint, you can contact the Council by any one of the methods set out above. Once your complaint has been received by the Council, a member of the Complaints and Compliments Team will record the details on our customer feedback database. This system is confidential and is only used by the members of the Complaints and Compliments Team who will be supporting you throughout the complaint process. The Complaints and Compliments Team will assess your complaint and agree with you the best approach to deal with the issues you have raised.

When we receive a complaint, our Complaints and Compliments Team will ensure that it is directed to the appropriate service / team that is responsible for the issues raised in the complaint, they will do this within **3 working days** of receipt.

Your complaint will be investigated by the Manager of the Service which the complaint relates to, or a nominated member of staff on their behalf. The representative from the Service will make contact with you at an early stage, either by meeting with you or speaking to you over the telephone, to make sure they have fully understood your complaint and the steps required to resolve the issue.

Following investigation of the issues raised, the representative from the Service will provide you with a written response. In their response, the Service representative will make recommendations or suggestions that they feel will help to 'put right' the issues that you have raised within your complaint.

We aim to resolve complaints with a single response but acknowledge that this is not always possible. Where this is the case we encourage a continued dialogue and between the customer and Council until the issue is resolved to a satisfactory conclusion.

We will always aim to provide you with a response to your complaint within **10 working days** following allocation to the appropriate Manager, but the procedure allows a **maximum of 20 working days** for us to respond to you should we need the extra time. We will always discuss with you if we need a little longer to ensure everything has been looked into properly.

If you are unhappy with a 'delayed' response and / or do not agree to an extension of the timescales, then you may request to escalate your complaint to the next stage. However, please anticipate that we may still require a response to be made to you at stage one before we instruct an independent investigation.

Once you have received our reply you then have **20 working days** in which to decide whether to accept or reject the proposed actions to resolve your complaint. If you accept the decision and proposed actions, the complaint will be closed on our system.

If you are still not happy with the outcome of your complaint, you may request a Stage 2 investigation of your complaint.

Stage 2: Formal investigation

Stage 2 of the process will see a formal investigation take place and an independent investigating officer (IO) and an independent person (IP) will be appointed to undertake the investigation. An independent investigator may be another Manager from within the Council who has not been directly involved in your case or someone from outside of the Council who is identified by the Complaints and Compliments Manager as having reasonable experience to undertake an investigation of the complaint.

The Investigating Officer will have received training in the investigation of complaints and will carry out a fair and objective investigation. The Investigating Officer and / or the Independent Person will meet with you and confirm the nature and details of your complaint and the outcome you are seeking. This is called a 'Record of Complaint'.

Once you have agreed your complaint with the Investigating Officer we will aim to complete the investigation and respond within **25 working days**.

If this is not possible we will advise you when you can expect a response. In any event the overall timescale may only be extended to a **maximum of 65 working days**. Any delays to timescales will be discussed with you.

The Investigating Officer will investigate the points of complaint that you have agreed in your 'Record of Complaint' and will submit a report to the appropriate Senior Manager of the Service to consider and respond to. If any failings or mistakes have been identified, then recommendations for improvements will be made by the Investigating Officer in the report.

In their response the Senior Manager will offer an apology if mistakes have been found to have been made and will explain what actions the Council will take as a result of the findings and recommendations of the investigation.

You may also be offered the opportunity to meet with a Senior Manager to discuss the outcome of your complaint, in the presence of the Investigating Officer and the Complaints Manager as appropriate.

Stage 3: Panel Review Meeting

If, following a full investigation at Stage 2, you are still unhappy with the findings and recommendations, you can request that your complaint is progressed to Stage 3. You should confirm your request to escalate your complaint by writing to the Complaints Team within 20 working days of the stage two response being made to you. You should explain the reasons why you remain unhappy and identify any aspects of the stage 2 response and / or report that you disagree with. At Stage 3 a Review Panel is formed to independently review your complaint. The Panel is not intended to consider new complaints but to review the initial complaint made and the process that has been followed to investigate your complaint at stage 2. A Stage 3 Panel Review Meeting must take place within **30 working days** from receiving your request to escalate your complaint.

The purpose of a Panel Review Meeting is to:

- listen to all parties
- consider the accuracy of the Stage 2 Investigation Report
- share any further information or advice that may help to resolve the complaint
- focus on achieving a resolution that everyone is happy with
- make recommendations and offer solutions

A Review Panel is made up of the following people:

- a Chair Person (from outside the Council)
- two independent people (from outside the Council)
- an advisor to the Panel (this is usually a member of staff who can offer guidance to the meeting about local policy and procedures)
- **You** and/or the person making the complaint on your behalf are invited to attend the panel to talk about the complaint and what you feel should happen to put things right. Your attendance at the Panel is optional.
- the Stage 2 Investigating Officer and a member of the Complaints and Compliments Team may also be asked to attend

If you are unable to attend the Panel Meeting then the Independent Chair Person will decide whether your attendance is essential to the progression of the panel and the panel may take place without you.

After the Panel Review Meeting, the Panel will meet in private to discuss the complaint and agree their findings and conclusions. The Chair of the Panel will then write to Director of the service within **5 working days** of the Panel Meeting to explain what they have agreed.

Having received the Panel's report, the relevant Director will consider the recommendations that have been made by the Panel and will write to you within **15 working days** to explain what the Council may do to put things right.

Early Referrals:

Where we are satisfied that a full and robust response has been provided at Stage 2 and the involvement of an independent panel is unlikely to achieve a different outcome i.e. where all the complaints have already been 'upheld', then we will discuss with you the option of referring the complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman sooner, negating the need for a Stage 3 Review Panel.

This decision will only be taken in discussion with the customer and at the discretion of the Ombudsman service.

What if you are still not happy?

If you are still unhappy following the completion of Stage 3, then please contact the Complaints and Compliments Team to discuss this with us. If the Council considers that we have offered the best response we can, and there is nothing further we can do to try and put things right for you, we will give you advice about how you can pursue the matter with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is independent of all government departments, councils and politicians. It offers a service which is confidential and free of charge. The Ombudsman has the same powers as the High Court to obtain information and documents from the Council to support complaints investigations.

Any member of the public is able to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman regarding council services. However, the Ombudsman will normally only accept a complaint if the respective Council's complaints procedure has been correctly and fully followed.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's contact details are listed below:

- **Telephone:** 0300 061 0614
- **Website:** <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

Is there a time limit for making a complaint to the Council?

There is a one year (12 month) time limit for making a complaint from when the events you are complaining about occurred. Our aim is to put things right as quickly as possible and it can be hard for us to do this if a long time has passed and services have changed or staff have left the Council.

However, if it is still possible to consider the complaint or there is something that we can do to help put things right for you, we will give this consideration.

The Complaints Manager will consider each case on its own merits and will discuss the decision on whether to investigate a complaint outside the one year time limit with the customer.

The following factors may be relevant in deciding if a complaint should be accepted outside the one year time limit:-

- Is it a genuine issue of vulnerability?
- If an investigation were to be conducted, how much benefit could be gained from it?
- Is there likely to be sufficient access to information or individuals involved, at the time, to enable an effective and fair investigation to be carried out?

Withdrawing a complaint:

You may withdraw or stop a complaint at any stage of the procedure and you do not need to tell us why. However, please bear in mind that if you do want to pick up the complaint again then the above time limit may apply.

If you stop your complaint then the Council may still consider that it is important to investigate the issues that you have raised, so that we can continue to learn and improve, but we will not contact you unless you would like us to.

Suspending a complaint

Your complaint may be suspended if there are concurrent proceedings underway, this may include, court proceedings, criminal investigations or safeguarding concerns. Once these other procedures have been concluded, you can contact the Complaints and Compliments Team to ask that your complaint is reconsidered. The Council cannot review decisions that have already been made by another organisation or body.

Putting things right (redress and compensation)

If we have made a mistake we will apologise and tell you what action we will take to ensure the same situation does not arise again for you or future customers. The apology would be given by the Manager on behalf of the relevant service.

If a mistake has resulted in financial loss to you, the question of financial redress will be considered on an individual basis. As the County Council is publicly funded we must make certain that it meets only justifiable and deserving claims. Any financial recompense offered as an outcome to a complaint will be made consideration of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman guidance on Remedies, a copy of which may be viewed on their website [here](#)

Insurance Claims

If a third party claim for damage or injury is made against the Council's Insurers then there is no further redress through the complaints procedure in relation to an unsuccessful claim. The claimant would need to seek independent legal advice. The complaints procedure does not award compensation.

Unreasonable Customer Behaviour

Northamptonshire County Council is committed to dealing with all complaints and requests for information fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who make them.

However, on a small number of occasions we will encounter individuals who demonstrate unreasonable behaviour and whose frequency of contact with us, or their behaviour, hinder our consideration of their and other people's complaints or requests.

We have a separate policy and procedure which sets out how we manage customers who may be unreasonable, persistent or vexatious. A copy of the policy can be found on Complaints, Comments and Compliments page of our [website](#)

Multi-organisation complaints:

It is possible that your complaint may have elements which need to be answered by a number of different people or services, for example if your case has had involvement from the Police or NHS, a private child care organisation or the probation service.

If your complaint requires a 'joint response' or needs to be directed to another organisation then we will discuss this with you and make sure that the roles and responsibilities of all the parties are clear. Information relating to your complaint will not be shared with any other organisation without your consent. The response to multi-organisation complaints will be shared with all parties to inform learning and improvement.

8. Our Compliments Procedure

You can make a compliment by using one of the methods outlined in section 5 of this policy. On receipt of any compliments you make about the Council, the Complaints and Compliments Team will record these onto the customer feedback database. We will share the compliments with the Service and/or member of staff it relates to.

All compliments will be reported within internal management reports and also included within Annual Reports and the information gathered from them will assist in improving our service to all our customers.

9. Our Comments Procedure

You can make a comment by using one of the methods outlined in section 5 of this policy.

On receipt of any comments you make about Council services, either positive or negative, the Complaints and Compliments Team will record these onto the customer feedback database. We will acknowledge receipt of your comments within **3 working days**. Unless otherwise agreed with you, we will not provide a full response to comments, other than acknowledgement of receipt of the comment.

Comments will be shared with the managers of the service they relate to so that they can take action if necessary. We will use comments received to help us when we are reviewing our services.

10. Learning from customer feedback:

We are committed to learning from all customer feedback we receive and will use the information to improve our services. The Complaints and Compliments Team will keep a record of all the complaints, comments and compliments that are made to the Council.

This information will be used to allow the Council to:

- understand what customers are complaining about
- understand why customers are complaining
- improve services through implementing learning from complaints
- understand what customers are complimenting the Council about

An annual report will be produced by the Council about the number, type and outcome of complaints. This will also include reference to the learning from complaints, effectiveness of this procedure and adherence to timescales. The report will be published on the Council's website.

11. Safeguarding Children and Young People

The safeguarding of a vulnerable child or young person takes precedence over any complaint, as our first priority must be to protect anyone at risk. If we believe that the complaint you have raised has identified a potentially abusive or neglectful situation, we will discuss this with you and ensure that the matter is reported immediately to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and, if required, the Police.

If it is necessary for the Council and its partners to investigate the situation your complaint may be put 'on hold' / 'suspended' until they have completed this work. Where possible we will continue to investigate any issues of your complaint that will not otherwise be addressed as part of the Child Protection procedures.

To report concerns relating to Children & Young People you can contact the Council by using one of the following methods:

- **Telephone:** 0300 126 1000 (Monday to Friday 8am-6pm)
01604 626938 (outside above times)
- **Email:** MASH@northamptonshire.gcsx.gov.uk

Further information can be found by visiting the Child Protection pages of the Council's website by clicking [here](#) or clicking on the link on the Council's homepage.

The Complaints and Compliments Team work very closely with the MASH to ensure that any complaints that suggest an act of abuse has occurred are reported and investigated under the correct procedure.

Complaints about the **process** of Child Protection Conferences (rather than the decision made) will be dealt with under this procedure.

Complaints that relate solely to section 47 Safeguarding investigations will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure.

12. Complaints relating to the Designated Officer (formerly Local Authority Designated Officer - LADO)

NCC has a Designated Officer (DO) role (formerly known as LADO). DOs are involved in the management and oversight of individual cases of allegations of abuse made against people who work with children. Their role is to offer consultation, give advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaise with the Police and other agencies and oversee the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible and follow a thorough and fair process.

As with a complaint about any other officer employed by the Council, if you are unhappy with the way that the DO has managed a case involving allegations of abuse, you can make a complaint following the process set out in section 5.

Any complaint relating to the DO is likely to be linked to other investigation processes - whether this is a safeguarding investigation, an HR investigation being

carried out by the organisation involved, or possible criminal investigations. In such instances, we may continue with investigations into a complaint regarding the actions of the DO if it is reasonable to do so and will not interfere with other investigation processes. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Complaints about the DO will follow the three-stage process set out in this Procedure.

All access to the investigation by the DO would need to be facilitated through a subject access request, this would be risk assessed to protect potential victims or media attention.

13. Confidentiality / Data Protection and Consent

All complaints are treated confidentially and only the Complaints and Compliments Team and the officer dealing with the complaint should know that it has been received. If for any reason it is necessary for us to inform another department or organisation about your complaint, we will discuss this with you first.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else or you are raising an issue which directly involves a customer who receives social care, then it may be necessary for us to seek consent from that person to ensure:

- they agree to a complaint being made
- they are happy for the Council, agency or partner to correspond with you on their behalf
- where necessary, and in the interest of resolving their complaint, they are happy for their details to be shared with another agency or partner employed by the Council or Health Service
- If you are making a complaint on behalf of a child or young person then when appropriate we may need to discuss this with them, to ensure that they agree to the complaint being made and when necessary they are happy for their information to be discussed

All aspects of the Customer Feedback Procedure meets the requirements of the legislation regarding Data Protection, Freedom of Information and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Any personal information obtained in relation to a complaint is only to be used for that purpose.

Details about how you may obtain information that the Council holds about you may be found on our website [here](#)

14. Equality and Diversity:

The Council is committed to delivering services and applying policies equally and fairly. We will not discriminate against you because of your age, disability, gender reassignment status, marital status, religion or belief, race or ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation or because you are pregnant or have recently had a baby.

This applies just as much during the complaints procedure as it does during the delivery of services.

We may ask you equality monitoring questions as part of recording the details of your complaint on our database. This is only used to help us monitor access to our complaints procedure. Responses to the questions are voluntary and you can choose to answer some but not all of the questions if you would like. If you choose not to answer the questions, this will not affect the way your complaint is dealt with.

Appendix 1: Flow diagram of Children and Young People's complaint process

Informal process

On the spot resolution

If you inform us that you have an issue we will try and resolve the problem within 2 working days. We will do this by:

- confirming with you what the issue is and the outcome you would like
- investigating the issue and trying to resolve it
- checking that you are happy with the resolution.



Formal process

Stage 1 – Local Resolution

A Team Manager, or senior member of staff on their behalf, will be assigned to look at your complaint. They will:

- contact you to confirm and fully understand your complaint
- look into your complaint and send you a response within 10 working days – if they need more time they will discuss this with you and try to resolve the issue within a total of 20 days



Stage 2 – Formal investigation

If you are unhappy with our response at Stage 1:

- we will offer you the option to meet with a Senior Manager and a Complaints Practitioner to discuss how best we can resolve your outstanding complaints
- if no resolution is reached during this meeting, or you do not wish to meet with us, an independent investigator will be assigned to carry out a full review of the original complaint, supported by and independent person from outside of the Authority
- an investigation will be undertaken and a response sent to you within 25 working days. If we need longer we will discuss this with you
- once the investigator's report is received, a senior manager will consider the findings and recommendations and write to you to inform you of what we will be doing to remedy any failures *- if there are aspects of your complaint which have not been upheld, or if the investigation finds significant failures on our behalf, we will sometimes also offer you a meeting with a senior manager to discuss your outstanding concerns.*



Stage 3 – Panel Review Meeting

If you are unhappy with our response at Stage 2 or the actions we have taken to remedy the findings:

- you can request a review of the investigation
- a Review Panel, made up of people independent to the Council, will be formed to independently review the complaint
- following the meeting, the Panel will meet to agree findings and conclusions and inform both you and the Council in 5 working days.
- The Director of Childrens' Social Care will then be asked to respond to you to confirm the actions to be taken within 15 working days



Local Government Ombudsman

If all stages of our complaints procedure have been exhausted and you are still not happy with our response, you can ask the Local government Ombudsman to carry out a review. You can approach the Ombudsman at any stage of the process, however they may advise that they expect the Authority to have first exhausted all stages of the complaints process.

Appendix 2: Services/ areas not covered by this procedure

The following Council services and areas are not covered by this procedure.

Schools:

- **Parents'/carers' complaints about schools:**
Each school is required to have its own complaints procedure, such complaints should be directed to the Head of the School or the Chair of its Governing Body.
- **Admission to schools:**
Visit the School Admissions section of our website which gives details of how to appeal if you are not satisfied with the place allocated to your child:
<http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/school-admissions/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Exclusion from school:**
For more information go to our website:
http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/pages/attendance-and-behaviour-support-for-parents.aspx#_ga=1.136224049.1218670778.1446474453
- **Special Educational Provision:** Please visit the Special Educational Needs and Disability Support pages of our website:
<http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/SEND/ehc/Pages/ehc-mediation.aspx>
- Religious education and collective worship
- National Curriculum issues

Other NCC-provided services

Please refer to our:-

[Adult Services Complaints Procedure](#)

[Corporate Complaints, Compliments, Comment Procedure](#)

Complaints about the conduct of contracted services employees:

Complaints relating to these services and / or their employees should in the first instance be directed to the relevant company/organisation to afford them an opportunity to put things right.

Northamptonshire County Council has a responsibility as a contractor of services to ensure that they are fit for purpose and are meeting the needs of our customers.

Any complaints shared with us relating to a contracted service will be shared with the Council's Commissioning Team. If you remain dissatisfied with the response that you received from a contracted provider of the Council, then please discuss this with the Complaints Team.

Other

Issues that should be dealt with by other proceedings including:

- Court Proceedings
- Criminal Proceedings
- Disciplinary Proceedings
- Grievance Proceedings
- Tribunals