

## Explaining **stage 1** of the complaints process

When you make a complaint, we take it seriously. We want to resolve the issue you're facing and we're pleased that you've come forward. It helps us to keep young people safe and improve the way we work. We have a three stage complaints procedure. We aim to resolve complaints as clearly and quickly as possible.

### What happens next?

- The local service manager or relevant manager will arrange to meet you.
- You can bring a friend or adult to this meeting.
- We can also arrange for someone to support you and help you if you wish.

### What happens at the meeting?

- The manager will want to know what has happened and what outcomes you would like to see as a result of the complaints process.
- They will listen to you and take you seriously.
- Together, you will decide what the next steps are.

### What happens after the meeting?

- You will receive an update from the manager within 10 working days (Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays). Sometimes they may call you or arrange to meet with you again.
- You will also receive this update in a letter or email.

### What if I am unhappy and my complaint hasn't been resolved, or you do not contact me within 10 working days with an update?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the **stage 1** complaint, please write to us to tell us why you are unhappy, providing full details of your reasons, within 10 working days of receiving written notification of the **stage 1** outcome. You can do this by:

- visiting [childrenssociety.org.uk/complaints](https://childrenssociety.org.uk/complaints)
- phoning **0300 303 7000**
- emailing [complaints@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:complaints@childrenssociety.org.uk)

We will do our best to stick to our policy deadline but there might be occasions when we need to take a little longer. If that happens, we will let you know.



**Remember ...**

**Think it**

**Say it**

**Sort it!**

## Explaining **stage 2** of the complaints process

### The reasons for taking the complaint to **stage 2** can be:

- You are unhappy with the decision at **stage 1**.

### OR

- You feel that we haven't kept you updated with what is happening and you haven't heard from us for more than five working days.

### What happens next?

- An independent staff member from another area of The Children's Society will arrange to meet you. This person does not manage your project or service, or the staff and volunteers that work there.
- You can bring a friend or adult to this meeting.
- We can also arrange for someone to support you and help you if you wish.

### What happens at the meeting?

- The independent staff member will want to know what has happened and what you want to happen as a result of complaining.
- If you are unhappy with the result at **stage 1**, they will want to find out more about this, so they will discuss it with you.
- They will listen to you and take you seriously.
- Together, you will decide what the next steps are.



### What happens after the meeting?

- You will receive an update from the independent staff member within 10 working days. Sometimes they may call you; sometimes they may meet with you again.
- You will also receive this update in a letter or email.
- We use what we've learned from your complaint to improve how we work.
- If further review is required, an investigating officer will be appointed.

### What if I am unhappy and my complaint hasn't been resolved, or you do not contact me within 10 working days with an update?

If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome at **stage 2**, please tell us in writing, setting out in full your grounds for appeal, within 10 working days of receiving the written **stage 2** decision notification, that you wish to appeal from that outcome. If at any stage you want more information, or you feel we are not doing what we agreed we would do, you can contact us by:

- phoning **0300 303 7000**
- emailing **complaints@childrenssociety.org.uk**

**Remember ...**

**Think it**

**Say it**

**Sort it!**

## Explaining **stage 3** of the complaints process

### The reasons for taking the complaint to **stage 3** can be:

- You are unhappy with the decision at **stage 2**.
- You feel that we haven't kept you updated with what is happening and you haven't heard from us for more than 10 working days.

### What happens next?

- A senior manager who has not previously been involved in **stage 1** or the underlying matter will arrange to meet you
- You can bring a friend or adult to this meeting.
- We can also arrange for someone to support you and help you if you wish.

### What happens at the meeting?

- The senior manager will want to know what has happened and what you want to happen as a result of complaining.
- If you are unhappy with the result at **stage 1** and **stage 2**, they will want to find out more about this, so they will discuss it with you.
- They will listen to you and take you seriously.
- Together, you will decide what the next steps are.

### What happens after the meeting?

- You will receive a report within 20 working days. Someone may call you, or someone may meet with you again.
- You will also receive an update in a letter or email.

### What do I do once I receive the report?

- You have up to 20 working days to respond to what has been written in the report.
- This is your chance to say what you think about what the senior manager has found out, and the solutions to put it right.

### What happens after I send in my response?

- The Children's Society will send you a final letter within 10 working days.
- This letter will include details of how what we have learned from your complaint will improve the way we work.

### What if I am still unhappy and my complaint hasn't been resolved?

Unfortunately, there is nothing we can do further to look into your complaint. You can contact the following organisations for further information and support:

- Children's Commissioner for England.  
**[childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)**
- OFSTED.  
**[gov.uk/ofsted](https://gov.uk/ofsted)**
- Charity Commission.  
**[gov.uk/charity-commission](https://gov.uk/charity-commission)**
- Information Commissioner Office.  
**[ico.org.uk](https://ico.org.uk)**
- Local Government Ombudsman.  
**[lgo.org.uk](https://lgo.org.uk)**



**If a complaint is complex, or we have a potential conflict of interest, The Children's Society may nominate an external independent third party to carry out the review on its behalf. We will let you know if we make this decision.**

The Children's Society will carefully consider any such decision to balance the need for fairness against a cost-effective and efficient review. Depending on the nature of the complaint, it may be necessary to notify external safeguarding teams and/or local police forces.