

Complaints guidance for children and young people



Overview

Putting Children First is our promise to you. It means we will always think about your safety first, treat you with respect, and build a trusting relationship with you. We will be honest, open, and reliable while we work with you and your family. If we don't do these things and you want to tell us what we could have done better, we welcome your feedback.

We want to know how you feel about our service. We need to know when things go well and when they don't, so we can fix them and improve for the future.

We want to make it easy for you to share your worries or concerns with us and show you what we have learned and changed because of your complaint.

This guide explains how we will respond to complaints or concerns from you outside of our role in your family court proceedings.

You can also find this information on our **Website**, and we have a feedback form if you just want to tell us about your experience without making a complaint.



If you want to make a complaint

Our goals are to:

Welcome complaints from you to help us improve how we work with you and other children in the future.

Support you in making complaints by providing a process that is kind, simple to understand, and meets your needs.

Give you and your family information to help you understand what the complaints process can and cannot do within family court proceedings.



What you can expect from us

When to Complain

You can tell us about your complaint anytime while we are working with you and up to 6 months after we finish. You can complain in person, by phone, email, or through our website.

Getting Help

If you need help to make a complaint, you can ask someone you trust to do it for you, or the organisations listed on this page can help you with an independent person called an advocate.

Children's Commissioner for Wales

Llewellyn House
Harbourside Business Park
Harbourside Road
Port Talbot SA13 1SB

Telephone: **0808 801 1000 (Freephone)**

Email: **post@childcomwales.org.uk**

Website: **www.childcomwales.org.uk**

Meic

Telephone: **0808 80 23456 (Freephone)**

SMS text: **84001**

Website: **www.meiccymru.org**



Talking to you

We will try to speak with you directly about your complaint. This helps us understand what went wrong. But we won't insist if you don't want to talk.

Best interests

If we think the person helping with your complaint isn't acting in your best interests, we might stop investigating. We'll tell you why in writing.

Acknowledgment

If you email or use our website to complain, we'll usually let you know we received it within one working day, but it might take longer sometimes.

Investigating Officer

An Investigating Officer will contact you within 3 working days of us acknowledging your complaint to introduce themselves. They haven't been involved in your case and will talk with you about your complaint. You can choose how to meet them (video, phone, in person, or email).

Investigation

The Investigating Officer will talk to the Cafcass Cymru practitioner and their manager to understand what happened and see if we could have done better.

Response

The Investigating Officer will send you a written response explaining what they did and their decision. They aim to do this within 15 working days of meeting you, or a timeframe agreed with you. If it takes longer, we'll keep you updated.



Sharing with parents/carers

We'll usually share the response with your parent or carer unless it might cause a risk to you or your family. We'll discuss this with you first.

Putting things right

In our response, we'll explain if we found things we need to fix. We'll also share what we could change or do better because of your complaint.

Ways to fix things

This might include:

- an explanation or apology for an error
- correcting our records or telling the court if we wrote something wrong
- changing how we do things to prevent the same mistakes.

Sharing feedback

The Investigating Officer will share the complaint and any improvements with the person involved and their manager.

Your feedback

We'll ask for your feedback on the complaints process to see if you're happy with how we handled it and if we need to make changes for future complaints.

Ombudsman

If you think we didn't handle your complaint well, you can contact the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales. They are separate from Cafcass Cymru and will check if we dealt with your complaint properly and fairly. You can contact them directly or ask someone you trust to do it for you.

The contact details are:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
CF355LJ

Telephone: **0300 790 0203**

Email: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Website: www.ombudsman.wales

