Local Government OMBUDSMAN



Gomplaints about the Gouncil by children and young people

How we can help

To complain to the Local Government Ombudsman phone our Advice Team on 0300 061 0614.

www.lgo.org.uk



Who we are

The Local Government
Ombudsman (LGO) deals with
complaints about councils
in England. This covers
a range of services including:

- social care
- housing
- > housing benefit.

We can also deal with some complaints about education.

Our job is to investigate complaints in a fair and independent way – we do not take sides. Our service is free.

We can consider complaints about things that have gone wrong in the way a service has been given or the way a decision has been made. We cannot usually question what a council has done simply because someone disagrees with it.







How we deal with complaints

We have a fast-track procedure for dealing with complaints made by or on behalf of children and young people up to and including the age of 21 (or 25 if they have a disability). When we receive a complaint, we will pass it to one of our investigators.

When looking at a complaint, our investigator will decide whether:

- we can investigate it
- it should be referred to another agency or a legal adviser, or
- it needs to go through the council's own complaints procedure first.

If we think we can investigate a complaint, we will give it a high priority. If we decide that a complaint should go to the council first, we can keep track of it as it goes through the council's system and keep you informed of progress.

We aim to resolve all complaints as quickly as possible, but they may take several months to resolve and complicated complaints may take longer. Whatever happens, we will keep you updated throughout the process.

Types of complaint

We can look into complaints about:

- the way social care services have assessed the needs of a child or young person with disabilities
- whether the council has provided the help and support it has agreed to give
- whether social care services have properly investigated reports of a child at risk of being harmed
- the way social care services have assessed and met the needs of young people who are looked after, or leaving care
- the advice and help given to young people who are homeless or have housing difficulties
- delays in dealing with a housing benefit claim or appeal
- whether a school admissions appeal or an exclusion appeal has been carried out properly
- how a council has provided education for a child or young person who is excluded from school, and
- > a council failing to deal properly with a child's special educational needs.

This is not a full list. To find out more about the type of complaints we can consider, contact the LGO Advice Team or visit our website at www.lgo.org.uk.



Putting things right

When we find fault with the way someone has been treated or the way a service has been provided, we aim to get things put right.

We can ask that the council, or sometimes the school, does things like:

- holds a new appeal hearing
- does the assessment of needs that the young person has been waiting for, or
- provides the services set out in a statement of special educational needs or community care assessment.

We can ask the council to change their procedures to try to make sure the problem does not happen again.

We can also ask for compensation for the young person if:

- they have missed out on services they should have received and it is difficult to make up for lost time, or
- they have been particularly badly treated.

The money can often be paid into a fund and used, for example, for extra education or support.

How to contact us

To contact the LGO Advice Team:

- call 0300 061 0614* (tell us if you are an advocate/adviser or a young person)
- text 'call back' to 0762 480 4299
- email advice@lgo.org.uk
- a fax us on 024 7682 0001
- write to the Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH.

For further information go to our website – www.lgo.org.uk (see our Young People section and the Guide for advisers section, which includes a referral form).

Please let us know if you have difficulty using our service, for example if you have a disability or if English is not your first language. If you need an interpreter, we can arrange this. We can also produce letters and reports in alternative formats.



*Calls to 03 numbers will cost no more than calls to national geographic numbers (starting 01 or 02) from both mobiles and landlines, and will be included as part of any inclusive call minutes or discount schemes in the same way as geographic calls. Please note that calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.