



# Having your say

Information for service users about  
Barnardo's Children's Services  
Complaints Procedure

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**Barnardo's**

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

Please tell your service or worker if you need this  
information in a different language or format

# Having your say

Barnardo's wants to ensure that the Children's Service you use is helpful or to know if it can be improved. We want you to be involved in the decisions made about your service. We appreciate your comments. We can offer you support to tell us what you think, listen to you, note your suggestions, involve you in decisions and tell you what is happening.

We take it very seriously if you are not happy with the service we provide. We want you to tell us your concerns so we can put things right when we need to.

All Barnardo's workers want the opportunity to learn from any concerns raised by the children, young people and others who use our services.

If you need to complain, we have a **Complaints Procedure**. The following pages say what you should do and what we will do if you decide to make a complaint.

If there is something you want to complain about please tell us as soon as possible, or within a year (12 months) of it happening, so events are fresh in people's minds and it is more likely that any staff involved are still working for Barnardo's. You can still complain if what happened was longer than a year ago, if you were accommodated by Barnardo's or if the matter was very serious. The Complaints Officer will decide if we will investigate after 12 months.

If it's difficult for you to discuss things which are going wrong on your own, you can have someone to help you to tell us. This person

is called an advocate. You might have the right to have one appointed or you could find a member of your family or a friend to help you. Please ask your worker or their manager for advice. If you are a parent of a child or young person who finds it difficult to speak out but is not happy with our service, you could act as their advocate or 'natural friend'. If you are not happy with the service they are getting and they are not able to express their view themselves, you can complain on their behalf.

Our **complaints registration and conclusion (sign off) forms** help us all be clear about what is being complained about; what you expect from making your complaint; what has happened in the investigation; when the process is finished and if it moves to another stage. We also use the

information from the forms to help us to learn from complaints. The person looking into your complaint will go through the forms with you at the beginning and at the end of Stage 1 and ask you to agree them either by signing and dating the forms or by letter or email.

## Stage 1

If you are not happy with a service please tell us by talking to a member of staff or a manager from the service or by talking to someone else who works for Barnardo's. You can also email **CS.Complaints@barnardos.org.uk** or **text** or voice message to **07917187718**. You could also write to the Complaints Officer at Barnardo's Head Office. We can also give you a Complaints Contact Card to fill in online or by hand and email or post to the Complaints Officer.

We will respond to you within 10 working days and try to put things right as soon as we can. If we don't think it is going to be possible to have an answer for you within that time the person looking into your complaint will explain and agree with you the date we will all be aiming for.

They will also complete the complaints registration form with you if this has not already been done. They will arrange to interview other people involved in what you are complaining about (this might include non Barnardo's workers) as well as you and to read any case records they consider necessary. Then they will make a decision about whether your complaint is upheld or not. They will arrange to meet with you to tell you the result of their investigation. They will also write a letter to you saying what has been decided. You and they will complete the complaint conclusion

(signing off) form.

If you think the investigation into your complaint has not been done properly or you disagree with what the person investigating your complaint has decided you can ask to use the next part of the complaints process (Stage 2).

If you decide to do this you need to inform us within 20 working days of the date of the letter about the decision about Stage 1 and tell us what you think has been left out of the Stage 1 investigation or why you disagree with the decision. If you speak to us rather than writing, we will write to you confirming what you have said. The person who writes to you will tell you if you are one of the few children or young people who have a longer time to say if they want their complaint to move to Stage 2. (You would need to be in or have been in accommodation provided by Barnardo's but not

have been in a Local Authority or Trust care system).

If your complaint is about an Adoption Service or an Adoption Support Service, except Adoption Support in Wales, Stage 1 and 2 (called informal and formal stages) investigations should be completed within 28 calendar days where reasonably practical.

## Stage 2

We aim to complete this stage of investigation within 25 working days of the Investigating Officer, or the local complaints manager, agreeing in writing with you what is to be investigated and what you hope to get from the investigation. They would also discuss with you, if we thought it would not be possible to do this within 25 working days, setting another date to aim for.

You can ask for your complaint to start at Stage 2. If it is a complex

matter we are likely to agree that this would be the best thing to do and might even suggest it ourselves.

At Stage 2 there will be two people involved in the investigation of your complaint (unless your service is a residential special school in England when it will be one person, not a member of Barnardo's staff, called the Independent Investigating Officer).

The two people are called the Investigating Officer (IO) who will be a member of Barnardo's staff and the Independent Person (IP), someone who does not work for Barnardo's and whose job is to comment on the fairness of the investigation. They do this by commenting on the interviews and on the Investigating Officer's report.

The investigation will be done in a similar way to Stage 1 and

both IO and IP may see the documents produced during Stage 1. The Investigating Officer will consider whether or not your complaint is upheld and make recommendations to Barnardo's about what could be done to learn from the complaint and to make improvements. The Investigating Officer and Independent Person will report to the complaints manager for the region; the manager will write to you to tell you whether your complaint is upheld or not and what recommendations will be carried out.

If you are not happy about the decision of the Stage 2 investigation you can ask for Stage 3 of the complaints procedure. You need to ask within 20 working days of the date of the letter telling you the Stage 2 decision. You can use the same ways as at Stage 1 to let us know or you could tell the IO and IP. If

you speak rather than writing to us we will write to you confirming what you said about the way the investigation had been done.

## Stage 3

The Director of the region, nation or business line will decide if the Stage 2 investigation needs to be looked into. If they decide it should be, this should happen within 45 working days of the date of your writing to us or the date of our writing to confirm what you said to us unless we all agree it is going to take longer. The Director will appoint someone from Barnardo's to review the investigation and report to them. The Director will decide if the Stage 2 investigation was done properly or if it needs to be done again. They will write to you to let you know. The Director's decision about this is final. As at Stage 2, if you are one of the few children and young people for

whom Barnardo's provides or did provide accommodation, who is not in a Local Authority or Trust care system, there is a different procedure for Stage 3 and the manager dealing with your complaint would make sure you and your advocate were informed.

### **After investigation**

We hope that you agree we have investigated your complaint fully and properly. After Stage 3 there is not another Barnardo's Children's Services Complaints Process for you to use. Sometimes there are statutory agencies you can contact if you are not happy about the service you have received from Barnardo's.

There are details at the end of this leaflet about the Local Authority or Trust or other Agencies you could tell about your concern.

## Other information

We know it can be difficult to get to the point of needing to make a complaint. We expect our staff to be clear, polite, respectful and responsive to you and it is really helpful in getting an issue dealt with if you are the same to our staff.

We would stop looking into a complaint and limit contact if the person complaining made threats or was grossly rude or persisted with their complaint after they had been informed that everything that could be done under the Complaints Procedure had been done. We would think about it very carefully before we decided to stop an investigation or limit or stop contact with someone if their behaviour was unacceptable or if they persisted with their complaint after it had been investigated. We would explain why.

## Your Local Authority or Trust details

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Local authority or trust worker \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Local authority or trust complaints officer \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Regulatory Body

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Web \_\_\_\_\_ Contact person \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Information Commissioner (If you are worried about a Data Protection matter)

ICO (Information Commissioner's Office), Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Tel 01625 545 745

Web [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

Email [mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Your Barnardo's service details**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Worker \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## **Barnardo's regional, national, business line or locality office for your service**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Complaints Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Director for region/nation/business line \_\_\_\_\_

Barnardo's Head Office – Children's Services Complaints Officer

Email [Cs.complaints@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:Cs.complaints@barnardos.org.uk)

Tel 020 8550 8822

Mobile (for voice or text messages) 079 1718 7718

## Contact:

**Head Office,**  
Tanners Lane,  
Barkingside,  
Ilford,  
Essex  
IG6 1QG  
Tel 020 8550 8822

### **National Offices**

Northern Ireland,  
542/544 Upper Newtownards Road,  
Belfast  
BT4 3HE  
028 9067 2366

Scotland,  
111 Oxfgangs Road North, Edinburgh  
EH14 1ED  
0131 446 7000

Cymru/Wales,  
Trident Court,  
East Moors Road,  
Cardiff  
CF24 5TD  
029 2049 3387

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