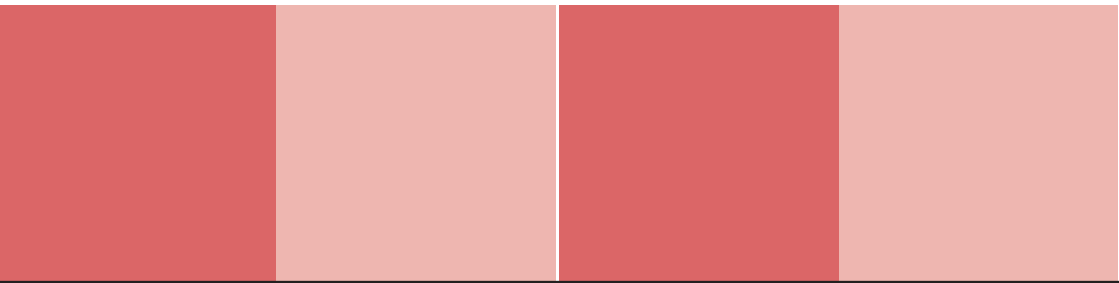


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IG11 8BR



2003-2004
Transforming Secondary Education



Get it sorted

A young person's guide to making a complaint



www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk

When should I complain?

Some examples of when you can complain are if:

- ➔ you think you are being treated badly or unfairly by a worker or carer;
- ➔ you think you are not being listened to, or your views are not being taken seriously;
- ➔ you think you are being punished unfairly;
- ➔ you think you are being discriminated against (for instance because of race, disability, religion or anything else); or
- ➔ you think you aren't getting what you need, or what you are entitled to. For example, seeing your family, getting support from your social worker, education, help when leaving care, health care, social life and hobbies.



If you feel you are in any danger, or that your problem is an emergency, it is really important that you tell someone straight away. You can call your social worker between

9am – 5pm
Monday – Friday

Outside this time, you can call the emergency duty team on

020
8594 8356.

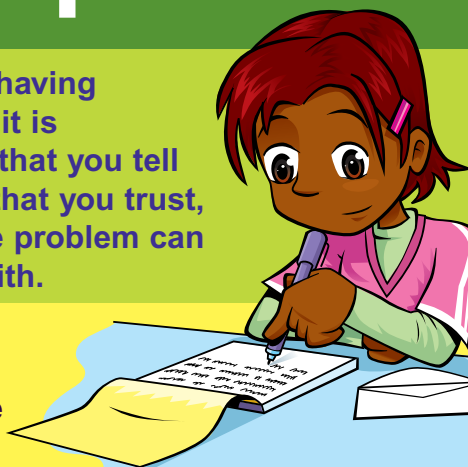
How can I complain?

If you are having problems, it is important that you tell someone that you trust, so that the problem can be dealt with.

Problems don't have to be huge before you let anyone know about them. If something is important to you, it is important to us. You can talk to the person who is looking after you, a friend, a parent, your social worker, a teacher or any adult that you feel will take you seriously.

Many problems can be sorted out this way. However, if your problem is not sorted out quickly, you can go on to make a complaint by filling in the complaints form attached to this leaflet and sending it to us. (You do not need a stamp.) Or, you can call the Freephone complaints line on 08000 130728.

We want to make sure that you are given help when making a complaint, so we will always check that you have an adult to help you with your complaint, if you want one.



What will happen to my complaint?



After you have called the Freephone complaints line, or filled in a Young Person's Complaints Form and posted it to us, there are three different stages to getting your complaint sorted out.



Advocates

If you do not have an adult you trust to help you with your complaint, you can ask for an advocate to help you. Advocates are independent and trained to support you to say what you want to say, or they could say it for you. Advocates do not work for social services, but for a charity called

Voice for the Child in Care (VCC).

We employ VCC advocates to work for you so you are in control. What you say to a VCC advocate does not have to be passed on to your social worker or social services (unless you or others are in real danger).

If you are worried about the way you are being looked after you can call VCC and speak to an advocate. Their number is **0808 800 5792** and you will not have to pay for the call. Or you can reach them at www.vcc-uk.org

Stage 1

Once the complaints officer at Social Services has received your complaint form, they **must** get back in touch with you within 14 days. They will say whether they agree with your complaint and what they are going to do about it.

Stage 2

If you are not happy with how we have dealt with your complaint at stage 1, you can ask the complaints officer to take the complaint to stage 2. This means that an Independent Investigating Officer (someone who doesn't work for social services) will check that your complaint has been taken seriously and that we have treated you fairly. You should get an answer within 28 days.

Stage 3

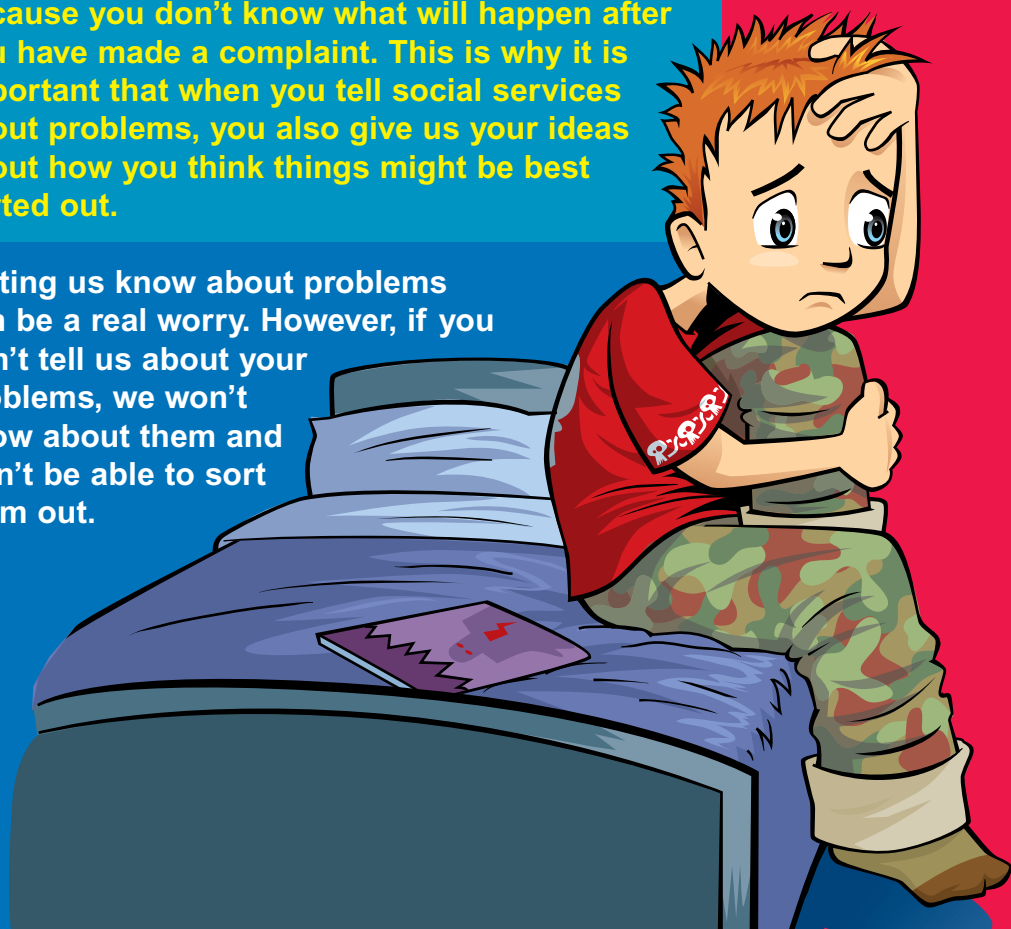
Finally, if you are not happy with the result of the stage 2 investigation, you can ask for a review panel meeting. This means that three people (the panel) will go through your complaint, check that it was dealt with in the proper way, then draw up a plan for what should be done. One of these people will be independent from Barking & Dagenham. You are allowed to come to this meeting.

Will I get in trouble for complaining?

You have the right to be looked after properly. You also have the right to speak out when you feel you are not being listened to or treated fairly. Sometimes only you are in a position to let social services know what is really going on in your life.

Making a complaint can be scary. You might be frightened of getting someone in trouble, or because you don't know what will happen after you have made a complaint. This is why it is important that when you tell social services about problems, you also give us your ideas about how you think things might be best sorted out.

Letting us know about problems can be a real worry. However, if you don't tell us about your problems, we won't know about them and won't be able to sort them out.



Young Person's Complaints Form

Name Age

Contact number

Do you have an adult to help you with your complaint? Yes No

If 'Yes', who is this adult?

Is it safe for us to ring or write to you? Yes No
(Is it OK if someone else picks up the phone or sees your letters?)

If 'No', what is the best way to contact you.

What is your complaint?

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What would you like to see done about it?

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