



Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Contains a feedback form
and a freepost envelope



DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

Customer Services Officer
Freephone 0800 212 783

Compliments, comments and complaints

Why is your feedback important?

We want to make sure that you are satisfied with our services. We need to know what we are doing well, what we can do better and what we are doing wrong. This is why we welcome all feedback about our services. We take all comments, complaints and compliments seriously to help us put things right for you.

How can you give us feedback?

You can tell us what you think by:

- ◆ telling any of our staff who you have contact with
- ◆ filling in the feedback form enclosed with this leaflet
- ◆ sending a letter to the Customer Services Manager
- ◆ sending a fax to the Customer Services Manager, the fax number is 01392 382577
- ◆ phoning the Customer Services Team **free on 0800 212 783**
- ◆ e-mailing the Customer Services Team on sscomp@devon.gov.uk
- ◆ contact us through our website at www.devon.gov.uk

Please send your feedback form either to the Customer Services Team in the enclosed self-addressed, pre-paid envelope, or you can hand it, or post it, to any member of staff.

How do we deal with your feedback?

Compliments

When we receive a compliment, we will write to thank you within two working days, and will pass your thanks to all people concerned. We will ensure that your thanks are recorded on their personal record of employment with us.

Comments

When we receive your comment, we will write to thank you within two working days. A manager will let you know within 15 working days how we will put your suggestion into practice or will explain why we can't.

Compliments, comments and complaints

Complaints

Please let us know if:

- ◆ we tell you we will do something but we do nothing
- ◆ we take too long to do something we have promised to do
- ◆ we tell you that we cannot help you, when you believe we should
- ◆ you think a member of our staff is rude, or treats you badly or unfairly.

When we receive your complaint, we will write to you within two working days informing you if this will be looked into further.

Social Services Complaints and Representations Procedure

Stage 1:

How will my complaint be handled?

We hope that most things that you are concerned about can be settled by talking to the person you usually see from Social Services. If you tell them what it is that is worrying you, they will try to find a solution.

You can also ring **01392 382331**, or you can fill in the feedback form in this leaflet and send it to your local Manager or our Customer Services Manager in the envelope provided. Should you need a full listing of addresses and telephone numbers of Social Services local offices, these can be found in our leaflet ***Social Services in Devon Explained*** (Ref. 1).

Whichever way you decide to make your complaint, if it is not direct to the person you usually see, it will most likely be dealt with by a local Manager. They will arrange for your concerns to be looked into and you will receive a written reply from them as soon as possible. How long this will take will depend on the complaint but it will usually be within 21 days of the date it is received by the Manager.

Compliments, comments and complaints

Stage 2:

What if I am not satisfied with the Manager's reply to my complaint?

The Customer Services Manager (or a member of staff acting on their behalf) will ask you to explain what it is that you are still unhappy about and what you would like to happen to put things right. It is important that this is put in writing and, if you require help to do so, our Customer Services Manager can arrange this for you.

The Customer Services Manager (or a member of staff acting on their behalf) will explain to you what will happen next in terms of timescales and keeping you informed.

We will let you know within five working days that we have received your complaint and how it will be dealt with. A trained Investigating Officer, who is independent of your case and complaint, will be appointed to look into your concerns. The Investigating Officer will write a report, with recommendations, to a Senior Manager who will write to you when the report has been considered.

If you are still not satisfied when you have received the Senior Manager's response to your complaint, you have the right to proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3:

What if I am still not satisfied?

You must make a request, in writing, for a **Review Panel Hearing**. Your letter should be sent to the Customer Services Manager within 28 days of the date on the Senior Manager's letter to you and you should say what you are still unhappy about and what you expect from the Review.

Compliments, comments and complaints

What is a Review Panel Hearing?

It is a meeting, with an independent chairperson, to consider the investigation and the Investigating Officer's report and make recommendations to the Director of Social Services.

The Review Panel consists of three people:

- ◆ a person who does not work for Devon County Council (an independent person who will chair the Panel)
- ◆ a County Councillor
- ◆ a Social Services Manager with experience in the area of your complaint.

None of these people will have been connected with your complaint or have any previous knowledge of the investigation so far.

The Panel Hearing will be arranged within 28 days of the Customer Services Manager receiving your request (wherever possible). You may attend to present your case and be accompanied by another person, who may speak for you if you wish.

The Panel's recommendations will (whenever possible) be sent to the Director of Social Services within 24 hours of the end of the Hearing and you will be sent a copy at the same time.

The Director of Social Services will consider his decision and will write to you within 28 days of the Hearing.

Devon County Council Complaints Procedure

Not all people who wish to complain are entitled to use the Devon Social Services Complaints & Representations Procedure.

If this is the case for your complaint, you can use the **Devon County Council Complaints Procedure** instead.

Compliments, comments and complaints

By this stage, it is most likely that you will have spoken with the Customer Services Manager. If the next stage for your complaint is for the matter to be considered under the Devon County Council Complaints Procedure, our Customer Services Manager can arrange this for you.

For further written details on the Devon County Council Complaints Procedure, please contact the Customer Services Manager or:

Local Government Information Centre

County Hall

Exeter EX2 4QR

Tel. 01392 383444

Email: customer@devon.gov.uk

Fax: 01392 382286

Website: www.devon.gov.uk

The leaflets: *Tell Us What Went Wrong* and *Tell Us What You Think* are available from the address above.

Other ways to complain

We hope that our Complaints & Representations Procedure will help you to make your concerns known to us whenever you feel unhappy with our services. However, as well as using the formal Procedure you have the right to write to any of the following people, all of whom will arrange for your concerns to be looked into:

- ◆ the Director of Social Services
- ◆ your Member of Parliament
- ◆ your local County Councillor.

The Local Government Ombudsman

If you are dissatisfied with the result of your complaint to Devon County Council Social Services or Devon County Council, you have the right to ask for your complaint to be examined independently by the Local Government Ombudsman whose address is:

The Oaks

Westwood Way

Westwood Business Park, Coventry CV4 8JB

Tel. 024 7682 0000.

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Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)

The CSCI is the single, independent inspectorate for all social care services in England. CSCI incorporates the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC). The CSCI will investigate complaints and concerns raised about social care service providers, and secure improvements where regulations and national minimum standards are not being met.

CSCI South West Regional Headquarters can be contacted at:

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Colston 33

33 Colston Avenue

Bristol BS1 4UA

Tel. 0117930 7110

Fax: 0117 930 7112

Website address: www.csci.gov.uk

or

Suite 1–7

Renslade House

Bonhay Road

Exeter EX4 3AY

Tel. 01392 474350

Information from Devon County Council **SOCIAL SERVICES**



Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Further copies from: Social Services General Office, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QR Tel. 01392 382946.

Other formats: To get a copy of this leaflet in a format that makes it easier for you to read, or in another language, please contact the Public Information and Communication Team, Tel. 01392 382332 (address above).

Comments on this leaflet: Please contact the Head of Public Information and Communication, Tel. 01392 382566 (address above). Email: paul.giblin@devon.gov.uk

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DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

www.devon.gov.uk/socialcare