

### Adult's Social Care Complaints Procedure & Timescales

This information has been provided to give you an overview of the statutory complaints procedure. For more detailed information about the complaints procedure, please contact the Customer Services Team (see below for details) who will be able to assist you. You may also like to take a look at our web pages – [www.devon.gov.uk/customerservicesfeedback](http://www.devon.gov.uk/customerservicesfeedback).

#### **How will you deal with my complaint?**

The statutory complaints procedure consists of 3 stages. When we receive your complaint, we will write to you within 2 working days informing you if we can look into it further and who is responsible for doing this. Your complaint will initially be dealt with under Stage 1 of the complaints procedure.

**Stage 1** – Local resolution. This is where a manager of the service you are complaining about investigates your complaint and provides you with a written response within 20 working days of the date your complaint was received by the council.

#### **What if I am not happy with the response to my complaint at Stage 1?**

If you are not happy with the response you receive, you could talk to the manager who wrote the letter to discuss it. If you do not wish to do this you can request progression to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure by writing to the Customer Services and Complaints Manager, using any of the contact methods overleaf, within 20 working days from the date you receive your response at Stage 1. You need to explain why you are still unhappy and what you would like to happen to put things right.

**Stage 2** - A trained investigating officer, who is independent of your case and complaint, will be appointed to look into your concerns. The investigating officer will contact you to discuss your complaint and your desired outcomes. They will then write a report, with recommendations, to a senior manager in the council who will write to you with his or her decisions when the report has been considered.

Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the investigating officer has 25 working days to complete the investigation, with the possibility of extending this to 65 working days (with the agreement of the complainant).

#### **What if I am not happy with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation?**

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation report, then you may make a request to the Customer Services and Complaints Manager for a Review Panel Hearing (Stage 3). It is important that you do this in writing to the Customer Services and Complaints Manager and that you make your request within 20 working days of the date you receive a copy of the final report and senior manager's letter to you.

**Stage 3** – Review Panel Hearing. This is where a panel of independent people look at whether your complaint has been dealt with adequately at Stage 2. The panel consists of 3 people: Two people who are independent of the council and an independent chairperson.

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

The Review Panel Hearing will be arranged and held within 30 working days from the date your request was received by the Customer Services and Complaints Manager. You may attend the hearing to present your case (this is optional). If you do decide to attend, you may be accompanied by another person who can speak for you if you wish.

The recommendations and notes of the Review Panel will be sent to the Executive Director of Adult and Community Services within 5 working days of the end of the hearing, and you will be sent a copy at the same time.

The Executive Director will consider his decision and will write to you within 15 working days of receiving the notes and recommendations of the panel.

### **What if I am still not satisfied?**

If you feel your complaints have not been adequately dealt with through the statutory complaints procedure, you have the right to take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. You can do this at any stage in the procedure. Their contact details are below.

### **I need help to progress my complaint – what do I do?**

If you need help to progress your complaint please contact the Customer Services Team (see below for details) who will be able to discuss your requirements with you. We understand and respect that some people may need advice and support from an independent advocate to make their complaint, to pursue it, to understand the process and to cope with the outcome. We acknowledge that this is particularly important for people who are vulnerable, or find it difficult to make their views heard, or for complainants whose first language is not English and those with communication difficulties.

#### **Contact details:**

##### **Customer Services Team and Complaints Manager:**

The Annexe	<b>Telephone:</b> 0800 212 783
County Hall	<b>Fax:</b> 01392 382577
Topsham Road	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:sscomp@devon.gov.uk">sscomp@devon.gov.uk</a>
Exeter	<b>Web:</b> <a href="http://www.devon.gov.uk/customerservicesfeedback">www.devon.gov.uk/customerservicesfeedback</a>
EX2 4QR	

##### **Local Government Ombudsman:**

PO Box 4771	<b>Telephone:</b> 0845 602 1983
Coventry	<b>Fax:</b> 0247 682 0001
CV4 0EH	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:advice@lgo.org.uk">advice@lgo.org.uk</a>
	<b>Web:</b> <a href="http://www.lgo.org.uk">www.lgo.org.uk</a>

**If you require this document in a different format, such as large print, please contact us on 0800 212 783.**