



Complaints Procedure Advocacy (CPA)

**Supporting you to complain
about Social Services**

Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire

**Advocacy Services at
The Care Forum**





Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need.

Advocacy Charter

What we do?

We are a team of advocates who support people who wish to make a complaint about Social Services. This support and assistance can be face to face or over the telephone. Our advocates are fully trained to:

- explain how the complaints procedure works
- listen to the problems you have had with Social Services
- support you through the complaints process including drafting letters and attending meetings with you.

Advocacy Services is a free service. At times we have more requests for our service than we can meet. This means we sometimes have to prioritise our service to clients who most need it.

Your advocate will:

- listen to the complaint you want to make and not pass judgement on you
- empower you to take on as much of the complaint as you feel able to
- keep in touch with you throughout your complaint
- be on your side

Your advocate will not:

- act as a counsellor, legal advisor or social worker
- know everything about Social Services, but if they don't know the answer they will try to find it out for you
- pass on information about you without your consent
- take action without your consent

Social Services Complaints Procedure

It is usually only possible to complain about events that have taken place within the last year, unless there are reasons why it has taken longer than this for you to complain.

Stage 1 – Local Resolution

Your complaint is usually given to the team manager of the service you are complaining about and they will investigate your complaint.

Stage 2 – Investigation

Your complaint is passed to an investigating officer who is not responsible for the service you are complaining about. They will arrange to meet with you to agree your complaint and then they will investigate further.

Stage 3 – Review Panel

This is a formal hearing by a panel of three people, of which at least two are independent of the local authority.

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint at Stage 3 you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.



How to refer

You can refer yourself or be referred by someone else:

Call us to make an appointment or to speak to someone on the phone. You can leave a message on our 24 hour voice mail service and someone will get back to you as soon as they can. The office is open Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Confidentiality

Everything you say to your advocate is kept confidential within The Care Forum. However there are rare occasions when we may have to breach confidentiality and are obliged to notify other organisations.



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Contact us

You can reach us by:

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Complaints Procedure Advocacy

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Please contact us if you would like this information in another language or format

Advocacy Services @ The Care Forum is part of and managed by **The Care Forum**

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