



Complaints about Adult Social Care

Many concerns can be resolved quickly with goodwill by making early contact with the member of staff that is working with you or the person you care for, this gives staff the opportunity to resolve matters informally. In many cases, staff within the service area concerned will be best placed to respond to and resolve concerns or complaints quickly. This should always be the aim wherever possible.

Currently the law does not prescribe that a local authority must follow a particular process and each local authority will have its own complaints procedure which can be requested in writing. However, the law does require the following:

- The timescale for acknowledging a complaint should usually be three working days after the date the complaint is received.
- The complainant must be given the opportunity to discuss the matter complained of.
- The complaint must be investigated in a manner appropriate to resolve it speedily and efficiently.
- Once the complaint has been investigated, the complainant must be sent a response which explains the investigation process, the conclusion reached and any remedial action the local authority proposes to take.
- The response must also inform the complainant of their right to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- There is a maximum response period of 6 months from the date the complaint was received, which can be extended by agreement.

Local Complaint investigation timescales

In Halton, we aim to send you a response to your complaint within 10 working days.

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. cases where other matters emerge or there are other mitigating circumstances), timescales can be extended to 20 working days, this will be agreed with you.

Complex investigations may become apparent before, during or after the local investigation, in these instances an independent investigation may be required. Where this is the case new timescales will be set to reflect that however our initial aim is to complete the complaint investigation, and any adjudication process, within 25 working days in complex cases this can be extended to 65 working days.

If you are still not happy you can:

Complain to the Local Government Ombudsman - The local authority should be given the opportunity to resolve the matter first and there must not be any legal action in process in relation to the complaint. However, the Ombudsman will consider a complaint without the completion of the full complaints procedure if the matter is urgent, there has been unreasonable delay or there has been a complete breakdown of trust.

A complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman must be made within 12 months of the date of the incident or matter being raised as the subject of complaint. The 12 month time limit may be extended with good reason providing it is still possible to efficiently investigate the complaint.

The Ombudsman can only investigate complaints resulting in maladministration that has resulted in injustice (e.g. discrimination, unnecessary delay, failure to abide by fair procedure). In addition, the Ombudsman may not investigate a complaint if they consider that there is an alternative remedy, such as a legal challenge by way of judicial review.

Because complaints can be dealt with in a variety of ways, there is an estimated timescale of three months to a year for a complaint resolution, depending on the complexity of the case.

Useful Contact Information

Adults Social Care - Customer Care Team

Address:

Runcorn Town Hall
Halton Borough Council
Heath Road
Runcorn
WA5 7TD

Telephone: 0151 511 6941

Email: ssdcustomer care@halton.gov.uk

Local Government Ombudsman

Address:

PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
Phone: 0845 602 1983 or 0300 061 0614
Web: www.lgo.org.uk