

This Factsheet is about complaints about child protection issues. It should be read together with our general information leaflet about our service.

The Council has a duty to investigate where a child is thought to be at risk of significant harm. You should normally complain first to the Council under the Children's Services complaints procedure. However, you may contact us directly if it appears that the Council is delaying in dealing with your complaint.

What the Ombudsman can do

The Ombudsman can look at the Council's response to concerns that a child is at risk. Some of the issues we can look at are:

Something wrong in the way in which the Council has investigated concerns about child protection which may have affected you personally. This could be:

- failure or delay in taking action in response to reports that a child is at risk.
- inadequate investigation and failure to follow the appropriate procedures and government guidance.
- failure to communicate with those involved and to co-operate with other agencies.
- inadequate or inaccurate reports (other than reports prepared for court)

Shortcomings in managing planning for a child's future following a child protection case conference. These could include:

- failure to implement the recommendations of a child protection conference.
- no adequate plan for the child, or the failure to implement such a plan.

In some cases the Ombudsman may be able to question decisions made by social workers

What the Ombudsman cannot do

He cannot:

- look at the Council's decision to start court proceedings.
- look at matters which the courts have dealt with. If you are unhappy with the outcome of a court case, the Ombudsman cannot change that decision and you should consider taking legal advice. Although in some cases we might be able to look at the Council's actions before the Council started court proceedings and at services provided after the court case has finished.

Issues to bear in mind



In child protection matters, the interests of the child are the primary consideration and this may not coincide with the interests of the adult making the complaint.

A number of different agencies may be involved in the child protection process. The Ombudsman can only look at complaints against the council and, in certain circumstances, health professionals involved.

Further information



The All Wales Child Protection Procedures April 2008 can be found via www.awcpp.org.uk. The procedures help safeguard children and promote their welfare.

You may also be able to get advice and help from the **Family Rights Group**, which covers England and Wales, and which advises parents and other family members whose children may require social care services. You can contact them on **0808 801 0366** and their website can be found at <http://www.frg.org.uk/index.html>

The Ombudsman is independent and impartial; he cannot order public bodies to do what he recommends – but, in practice, they almost always do.

Examples of cases that the Ombudsman has looked at can be found on our website. Please see www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

If you are unsure whether the Ombudsman would be able to look into your complaint, please contact us:

- **phone** 0845 601 0987;
 - **e-mail** ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk;
 - **visit the website at** www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk;
 - **write to:** The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ
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