

Roles and responsibilities during the Stage 2 Children's Services Complaints Process

Actions to be undertaken by Hertfordshire County Council:

The Complaints Manager will:

- *Appoint an Investigating Officer (I.O) to lead the investigation and prepare a written report for adjudication by a senior manager.*
- *Request staff to provide information or documents to facilitate the investigation.*
- *Considers matters of disclosure and confidentiality.*
- *Appoint an Independent Person (I.P) to the investigation to ensure a robust and fair process (this applies to Children Act complaints only).*
- *Send a copy of the complaint (or relevant part of the complaint) to anyone involved in the complaint.*

The I.O (and I.P where applicable) will:

- *Meet with the Complainant to clarify unresolved complaints and desired outcomes.*
- *The I.O will plan the investigation and inform the CS Complaints Team of who will be interviewed and identify which files will be needed, etc.*
- *The Complaints Team will ensure that interview rooms are booked, files are available and that electronic records are made accessible.*
- *The Complaints Team will inform staff that they are required to attend an interview and what is expected of them.*

In order that the Investigation can be conducted and concluded in a timely manner, Complainants must:

- *Agree a Statement of Complaints and Desired Outcomes with the I.O and I.P within 10 working days of them making contact.*
- *Agree to work with the Investigators in a timely manner to avoid delays.*
- *Agree not to add additional complaints during the investigation and to keep to the agreed Statement of Complaint throughout the investigation.*
- *Agree and discuss clear desired outcomes to resolve their complaint.*
- *Sign a 'Consent to Access Records' form that allows the I.O and I.P to carry out their investigation unhindered.*

Timescales will be reviewed and monitored where:

- *The Complainant attempts to add further complaints to the investigation. This can only be agreed by the Complaints Manager in exceptional cases who will then review and extend the timescales for the investigation as necessary.*
- *The Complainant will be given two opportunities to engage with the Investigators. Where there are delays or a lack of engagement or cooperation with the Complaint Investigation, the Complaints Manager will review the case and may decide to close the Investigation. In such circumstances, the Complainant will not be able to request a further investigation unless there are exceptional reasons.*

This information can be made available on request in other formats, including large print, Braille, audio and other languages.

