

**Not
getting
the help
or services
you need?**



**Then find out how you can
make a complaint to NICCY**

NICCY is here to help

NICCY's job is to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people.

If you are a young person and are not getting the help and services you need or think you are entitled too, **we want to hear from you.**

You may also be the parent of a child in this situation, and again we want to hear from you.

You can make a complaint and there are different ways **we can help you** with this. This leaflet explains what these are, how we go about it and what you need to do.



Who we can help

NICCY can help children and young people up to age 18, and in some special cases up to age 21 (if a young person has a disability or is, or has been in care). We can also help people who contact us on behalf of a child or young person – this could be a parent, a carer or sometimes a professional supporting a child or young person.



Who we can help you make a complaint about

We can help you if your complaint is about a public body – this includes schools, health providers, social services, hospitals, and others. These are called **‘relevant authorities’**.

There are two ways we help:

- We can help you to make your complaint to the relevant authority
- We can also help you if you want to complain about the relevant authority



Before bringing a complaint to us

Before coming to us it is important to see if you can sort the issue out yourself. This might mean following the complaints process within the organisation you are complaining about, or meeting with someone in the organisation (with a parent or carer if appropriate) to talk about the problem to see if it can be fixed.

If you feel you are not able to do this you can still contact us for advice.



How to make a complaint to us

When you are making a complaint to us we will need as much information as possible.

The way we do this is by collecting all the information together.

You can do this online by filling out the form on our website -

**[www.niccy.org/
complaintsandadviceform](http://www.niccy.org/complaintsandadviceform)**

You can also call us on **028 9031 1616** to speak to a member of the Legal team, who can send a copy of the form out to you.

We can help you if you are finding it hard to fill out the form and not sure how to do it yourself.



Working out how best to help you

Once we have the all the information we need, will look at it to work out the best way to help you. Sometimes there may be things that we can't help you with, as they are outside our remit (legal powers). We will explain more about this further on, but if we are not able to help you ourselves we will always tell you about someone else who can.



A member of our team will then contact you to explain how we plan to take things forward.

The different types of complaint we can help you with

Depending on your situation and information you have given us, there are three possible ways we can help you:

1. **As a casework matter** – this is where we help you when you make a complaint to the relevant authority
2. **As an investigation** – this is where we carry out a full and impartial investigation into what happened
3. **At legal proceedings** – this is where we advise or represent you, at for example, a Special Educational Needs or Disability Tribunal

Some examples

✓ **A place to live** –
we helped a young
person find a safe
place to live when they
couldn't stay at home

✓ **Getting to school**
– we made sure a
young person got the
transport they needed
to get to their school

✓ **Having a voice**
– we made sure
a young person
was listened to
by their social
worker

✓ **Classroom
help** – we
made sure a
young person
got extra help
in school

✓ **Mental health** –
we helped a young
person to get the help
they needed when
they were having a
hard time

✓ **Health Care** –
We helped a young
person get the health
care they needed

✓ **Bullying** –
we helped a
child who was
being bullied
at school

How casework works

If we think the best way to deal with your complaint is as casework, it means we will work for you and support you to make things better. We will **help you each step of the way**, with advice and in some circumstances we will contact the relevant authority on your behalf, or attend meetings with you. We will keep you updated throughout the process, and equally it is important that you also keep us updated as things change.

Our aim in casework is to resolve the matter to your satisfaction.



How investigations work

NICCY has legal powers to carry out different types of investigations, depending on the details of your complaint.

If we think an investigation is the best way forward, we will contact you to let you know. During investigations we are not allowed to take sides. This means we cannot do things on your behalf, but instead we look at all the information. As well as the information you have given us, we will contact the relevant authority to give them a chance to explain. Once we have the information from both sides, we will look at it and write a report. This will usually include recommendations or ways we think things can be made better.

How legal proceedings work

Depending on your situation we may be able to help you if you are taking legal action. We have rules which tell us what type of legal action we can support you with. It could be helping to pay for the legal costs, or it could be representing you (acting on your behalf) in the legal proceedings.

At Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunals for example, we can help you from getting your case ready, right through to representing you at the actual hearing.



Things we cannot help you with

We have rules (NICCY's legislation) about the kinds of complaints that we can help with. This means we can only deal with complaints about relevant authorities, and we are not allowed to help if there is another organisation whose job it is to help. For example:

- We cannot help with complaints about the police as it is the Police Ombudsman's job to do this
- We cannot help with complaints about who a child or young person should live with (residence orders) or how and when they should see an absent parent (contact orders), as these are private family law matters which do not involve a relevant authority

If you are **not sure whether or not we can help, please contact us.** We will always listen and if we can't help you ourselves, we will tell you about someone else who can.



How to contact us

There are different ways you can contact us, and you can also speak to a member of the Legal and Investigations Team if you have any questions or need more information.

T: 028 9031 1616
E: info@niccy.org
W: www.niccy.org
Twitter: [@nichildcom](https://twitter.com/nichildcom)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/nichildrenscommissioner
Instagram: [niccy_yp](https://www.instagram.com/niccy_yp)



design: concordwdesign.com

Please contact the Communications team at NICCY if you require alternative formats of this material.