



MIDDLETOWN CENTRE FOR
AUTISM

Easy Read Complaints Guide

How to tell us when
something has gone
wrong

Approved by the MCA Board: [date]
Effective from: 1 January 2027

This is an Easy Read summary of our Complaints Policy.

You can ask us for the full policy, large print, audio, another language or another format.

What is a complaint?

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A complaint means you are unhappy with something MCA has done, or has not done.

You do not have to use the word “complaint”.

You may be unhappy with a service.

There may have been a delay or poor communication.

Information may have been wrong or unclear.

You may be unhappy with how a member of staff behaved.

Making a complaint is free.

Who can complain?

Who can complain?



Anyone who uses, asks for, or is affected by an MCA service can complain.

This includes children and young people, families, carers, schools, professionals, students, partners and members of the public.

You can ask someone you trust to complain for you.

We may need your permission before we share your personal information with another person.

We will help you

We will help you



Tell us what support you need to make your complaint.

We will make reasonable adjustments free of charge.

We can help you explain or write down your complaint.

We can speak by phone, video or face to face.

We can provide Easy Read, large print, audio or another format.

We can arrange an interpreter, including BSL or ISL.

You can have breaks or extra time.

You can use an advocate or trusted person.

You will not be treated less favourably because you complain.

How to make a complaint

How to make a complaint



You can complain by speaking, phoning, emailing, writing or using our website.

You do not need to fill in a form.

Phone: +44 (0)28 3751 5750

Email:

admin@middletownautism.com

Post: Complaints

Coordinator, Middletown
Centre for Autism, 35
Church Street, Middletown,
County Armagh, BT60 4HZ

Website:

www.middletownautism.com/contacts

In your first email or website message, send only your name and safe contact details. Ask us to contact you securely. Do not send sensitive personal information.

What to tell us

What to tell us



Tell us as much as you can.

Your name and how you want us to contact you.

What happened, where it happened and when it happened.

Which service or people were involved.

How the problem affected you.

What you would like MCA to do.

We will still help you if you cannot give us all this information. Please complain as soon as possible. We normally accept complaints made within 6 months.

Stage 1: we try to sort it out quickly

Stage 1: we try to sort it out quickly



A line manager or service manager will normally speak with you.

They will listen, make sure they understand the problem and ask what outcome you want.

They may explain what happened, take action, give reassurance or apologise.

We will record every complaint, even if it is sorted out by talking.

We will normally give you a decision or agreed solution within 5 working days.

Only in exceptional circumstances, this may take up to 10 working days in total.

Working days are usually Monday to Friday. They do not include bank holidays.

Stage 2: we investigate

Stage 2: we investigate



You can ask for Stage 2 if you are still unhappy after Stage 1.

Please ask within 30 working days of the Stage 1 response.

A different manager or investigator will normally take a fresh and impartial look.

We will acknowledge Stage 2 within 3 working days.

We will normally send our final response within 20 working days.

If we need longer, we will explain why, give you a new date and keep you updated.

What MCA can do

What MCA can do



The outcome will depend on what happened.

We may explain or clarify what happened.

We may apologise.

We may correct information or fix a problem.

We may reconsider how a service is delivered.

We may support or train staff.

We may change a process so the problem is less likely to happen again.

We will explain if we cannot give you the outcome you asked for.

If you are still unhappy

If you are still unhappy



After MCA sends its final Stage 2 response, you can ask the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) to look at your complaint.

NIPSO is independent and free.

NIPSO normally expects you to finish MCA's complaints process first.

Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Website: www.nipso.org.uk

Post: FREEPOST NIPSO or
33 Wellington Place,
Belfast, BT1 6HN

NIPSO generally expects you to contact it within 6 months of MCA's final response. If another external route may apply to a service in Ireland, MCA will explain it to you.

Some concerns use another process

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Some concerns need to be handled under a different process.

This may include safeguarding, immediate danger, suspected crime, staff employment matters, information requests, legal claims or court cases.

We will explain what process applies and help you reach the right person or organisation.

If your complaint is about the Chief Executive, Chair or another Board member, we will make sure it is handled by someone who is independent of the matter.

Privacy and respectful communication

Privacy and respectful communication



We will keep complaint information secure.

We will share it only with people who need it to consider the complaint, take action or meet a legal duty.

A person who is complained about will normally be told what the complaint says and be given a fair chance to respond.

We understand that people may feel upset or angry. We will be patient and respectful. We ask everyone to treat each other with respect.

If behaviour becomes abusive, threatening or discriminatory, MCA may set reasonable limits on how communication takes place.

We learn from complaints

We learn from complaints



We record complaints, outcomes and actions.

Managers follow up improvements and make sure actions are completed.

MCA's Senior Management Team, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Board receive information about complaints and learning.

At least once a year, MCA will publish anonymous information about complaints, response times, actions and lessons learned.

We will protect people's identity when we publish complaints information.

Contact MCA

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Tell us when something has gone wrong.

Tell us what support or reasonable adjustment you need.

Phone: +44 (0)28 3751 5750

Email:

admin@middletownautism.com

Post: Complaints

Coordinator, Middletown
Centre for Autism, 35
Church Street, Middletown,
County Armagh, BT60 4HZ

Website:

www.middletownautism.com/contacts

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