

Annex A – Table of legislation timescales

Legislation prior to 1 September 2006

Stage	Action	Timescale
One	Problem Solving Stage- Attempt to resolve the complaint without a formal investigation. (In children’s services the complainant can elect to move immediately to a stage two investigation.)	Initial contact within 10 working days. Full response within 28 days.
Two	Formal Investigation Stage- Where the customer is not happy with the initial response to a complaint, they can request that a formal investigation is conducted which will be responded to by the head of service. Appointment of an independent person must be made for complaints about children’s services.	Initial contact within 10 working days. Full response within 28 days. Within 48 hrs.
Three	If the customer is dissatisfied with the outcome of a stage two investigation, a request can be made within 28 days that the complaint be considered by a complaints review panel.	Panel to be convened within 28 days of the customer’s request. The panel to record a decision within 24 hours of the end of the hearing. Director writes to the customer within 28 days of the panel’s recommendation.
	The customer can also contact the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) after the council’s procedure has been exhausted.	

Legislation implemented on 1 September 2006

Stage	Action	Timescale
One	Problem Solving - attempt by the first line manager to resolve the complaint without a formal investigation.	Full response within 10 working days. Can be extended to 20 working days in exceptional circumstances with the customers agreement
Two	Formal Investigation - if the customer is not happy with the response at stage one, or the response was not in time, they can request a formal investigation. This will be investigated by a senior manager who has no management responsibility for the service being complained about, or a person independent of the council. Where the complaint is about children's services or in adult services is complex, or the complainant is vulnerable, an independent person must oversee the investigation. The head of service will then send the complainant their written response.	Full response within 25 working Days. Can be extended to 65 working days in exceptional circumstances.
Three	If the customer is dissatisfied with the outcome of a stage two investigation, a request can be made within 20 days for the complaint to be considered by a complaints review panel.	Panel to be held within 30 days of the customer's request. The panel will send a copy of their report to the director and complainant within 5 working days of the panel meeting. The director will then write to the customer within 15 working days of receiving the panel's report.
	The customer can contact the LGO after the council's procedure has been exhausted.	