

Wirral Borough Council

Complaints Policy

Wirral Borough Council Complaints Policy

Wirral Council is committed to delivering a high-quality service to all our customers, but we recognise that occasionally things do go wrong. In these circumstances, we want to make it as quick and simple as possible to raise your concerns with us and to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.

We see any complaint or feedback as an opportunity to improve our services so that our customers can have confidence in us to deliver the services they expect.

There is a time limit of 12 months from when the matter being complained about occurred to when a complaint can be made. After this time a complaint will not be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We would also like to hear from you if you have had a positive experience in accessing our services. Especially if there is a member of staff/team/facility that you feel stands out as delivering excellent service. Tell us about this; we are always happy to hear from satisfied customers.

Our Complaints Policy Covers

- The Standard of service we provide
- The behaviour of our staff
- The facilities that are offered

The Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is...

"An expression of dissatisfaction about the council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action taken, or the service was provided by the council itself or a body acting on behalf of the Council".

A complaint is not an initial request for service. If you have a problem with a Council Service, contact the department or local office first so that the problem can be dealt with quickly by the department concerned.

Our Complaints Policy does not cover

- Anonymous complaints
- Complaints about access to information where procedures and remedies are set out in legislation eg Freedom of Information Act, Data protection Act
- Statutory complaints about Children's Social Care
<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/complaints/complaints-about-childrens-social-care>
- Statutory complaints about Adult Social Care

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/complaints/complaints-about-adult-social-services>

- Appeals against decisions by the Council where there is a defined Appeals process, eg Fixed Penalties, School Admissions, School Bus Passes, Planning Applications, Council Tax and Housing Benefits.
- Initial concerns over a failure in a scheduled service, eg a missed Bin collection, these types of issues should be addressed with the Service concerned directly, where they will hopefully be able to rectify the situation as soon as possible.
- A concern or expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought, again these should be sought through the relevant service
- Employment issues
- The Council's Complaints Process and access to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) is not a mechanism for organisations, companies, and other public bodies to resolve issues or disputes; independent advice should be sought on these matters

What to expect if you complain

If you have concerns that can't be resolved straight away or within a defined timescale – we will:

- Acknowledge your complaint and issue you with a unique customer care resolution number
- Keep you informed if the investigation looks likely to take longer than the agreed deadlines. We will try to give you a realistic resolution date if this is possible.
- Provide you with a final response in a format you would prefer i.e. letter or email
- We will treat your complaint in confidence
- You will be treated with courtesy and fairness at all times – we would hope that you will be fair and courteous in your dealings with us

How to complain

The quickest and simplest way to make a complaint or to let us have feedback is via the www.wirral.gov.uk website, however if you prefer you can make your complaint by email or letter, or you can contact the Customer Feedback Team via the Council's main switchboard, who in the first instance may be able to offer support and forward on your complaint. Our contact details are:

Customer Feedback Team
Wirral Council
PO Box 290
Brighton Street
Wallasey
Wirral
CH27 9FQ

Tel: 0151 606 2004 or E-Mail: customerfeedback@wirral.gov.uk

The Stages of the Complaints procedure

Stage 1 - Resolution

- This is the first opportunity for the service to resolve a complaint. Most complaints are resolved at this level, and we will ask the **Team Manager or a Senior Manager** responsible for the service you have complained about to investigate and respond.
- We will acknowledge that we have received your complaint and issue you with a Customer Care Resolution Number
- We will strive to respond to your allegations within 15 working days. However if this is not achievable, we will contact to let you know. We will always try to give you a realistic response date
- We will contact you with the outcome of the investigation and what, if any, actions have been taken to resolve your complaint.
- If you do not receive a response to your complaint within 10 weeks from lodging your complaint, you are entitled to escalate your complaint to the next stage within the procedures. Unless you have been advised that an ongoing investigation is taking place.

What happens if you aren't satisfied with the response from Stage 1 Resolution

Stage 2 – Review Stage

If you're not satisfied with the response you received at Stage 1 - The Resolution Stage, you can request that the Council carries out an independent review and this will be undertaken by a Senior Manager from another Service that has had no involvement in the Service you have complained about. Your request can be sent to the Customer Feedback Team. You need to be clear on the points that you disagree with and why the response was not what you were expecting.

It is imperative for the purpose of transparency and independence that any Stage 2 review is conducted by an independent Senior Manager. This manager, even though they may not have the detailed technical understanding of a specific subject area, will have the ability to request specialist and appropriate support as well as make recommendations, implement findings and apply influence when required.

Please be aware that the review will be focussed on the initial complaint that was submitted and under normal circumstances will not consider fresh issues that have not been raised at the outset.

- We aim to respond within 15 working days, but we will let you know if it will be longer. Again, if you do not receive a response to your complaint within 10 weeks from lodging your complaint, you are entitled to escalate your complaint to the next stage within the procedures i.e LGSCO. Unless you have been advised that an ongoing investigation is still taking place.

What happens if you aren't satisfied with the Stage 2 Review Stage

If you're still not satisfied with our response to your complaint, you can ask the Local Government Ombudsman (LGSCO) to review how we have handled your complaint and they can be contacted via:

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
Telephone Number - 0300 061 0614
Website - <http://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint>

Procedure Admin

	Name	Role	Date
Issued by	Shelby Loudon	Customer Feedback Team Leader	07/08/2017
Approved by	Simon Cuerden	Corporate Business Support Manager	07/08/2017
Review	Simon Cuerden	Business Unit Mgr	01/08/2022
Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change to Council Number: now via Switchboard (0151 606 2004)• Additions of Appeal process inc Bus Passes, Council Tax and Housing Benefit• Re-iteration of the independence of the Stage 2 reviewing officer• Amended LGO to LGSCO• Contact Details Amended		
Next Review			01/08/2024