



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK POLICY - FOR COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS 2019

Introduction and Overview

We aim to provide good quality services for everyone but sometimes things can go wrong. If they do, we need to know so we can put them right and learn from our mistakes. We also like to know when we do something well, or a customer has a suggestion about something we could do better.

We encourage anyone that uses or is affected by our services to give us feedback. We also accept feedback from people acting on behalf of someone else, with their consent, such as friends or representatives, solicitors, or advocacy workers.

Our preferred method to receive feedback is to submit the request via our eform available on the Haringey website. This enables the request to be automatically directed to the appropriate place to enable a more timely response.

We will also accept requests in writing, face to face or by telephone however direct emails to individual officers will not be accepted and customers will be signposted to the e-form to submit their complaint.

We require any organisation that provides services on our behalf to comply with this policy by:

- recording and responding to customer feedback;
- providing us with information when requested; and
- assisting us with complaint investigations as appropriate.

Where a member of the public has raised their concerns about a Council Service through an elected member (a Councillor or MP) rather than through the complaints process, this is dealt with as a Member Enquiry rather than a complaint.

Our definition of a complaint is “an expression of dissatisfaction about the Council’s provision of, or failure to provide, a service for which it has responsibility that occurred in the past 12 months.”

A simple enquiry or request for a service, such as a report of a missed bin collection or an issue not previously known to the Council, will not be recorded as a complaint.

Our Complaints Process

Other than in certain circumstances there are two stages to a complaint. We will endeavour to resolve any issues at Stage One, however if an individual is not happy with the response provided they can escalate their complaint to a Stage Two with details of what aspects of the Stage One response they are dissatisfied with and what action they now want the Council to take.

Complaints about members of staff, the application of a Council Policy, data protection breaches or freedom of information /environmental information regulations requests are dealt with as a one-stage internal process.

Stage Two complaints are carried out at our discretion based on why the complainant is unhappy with the response provided, and whether we would be able to achieve the result the complainant wants or in some cases whether it would be better to ask the service to look at the issues again.

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	Stage One	Stage Two	Data Protection / Freedom of Information / Environmental Regulations
Acknowledgement	Within two working days of the e-form being submitted as long as all necessary information has been provided.	Within five working days of the e-form being submitted as long as all necessary information has been provided.	Within five working days of being received by the Corporate Feedback Team as long as all necessary information has been provided.
Response	Within ten working days of the e-form being submitted as long as all necessary information has been provided.	Within twenty-five working days of the e-form being submitted as long as all necessary information has been provided.	Within twenty-five working days of the e-form being submitted as long as all necessary information has been provided.
Timescale	Within 12 months of the incident occurring	Within 6 months of the Stage One response.	Within 2 months of the original response
Next Steps if still dissatisfied	Escalate to Stage Two	Contact relevant Ombudsman	Contact Information Commissioner

We will not investigate complaints which fall into one of the following categories:

- If there is an alternative right of appeal
- If the complaint involves a potential insurance claim
- If the complaint relates to Child Protection Conferences
- If the complaint has already been investigated by the Council or the relevant Ombudsman
- If the complaint relates to a Councillor – these are dealt with via a separate process
- Where the person making the complaint has not been directly affected by the matter complained about.
- About something affecting all or most people in the area, such as that the Council has wasted public money.
- About or involving legal or court proceedings, including evidence given, or actions and decision by staff in those proceedings.
- From a contractor, supplier or service provider disputing invoices, terms of contracts or alleging breaches of contracts
- Involving issues related to an employee or ex-employees' personnel matters.

Complaints relating to Adult Social Care and / or Children and Young Peoples Social Care are dealt with under different regulations set out in Appendix One and Two.

Unreasonably Persistent Complainants and Unreasonable Customer Behaviour

We are committed to dealing with all customers fairly, ensuring we provide high quality services, and a clear, and timely response when they contact us. In a minority of cases where customers exhibit unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour this impacts on resources, the wellbeing of our staff and can hinder our service provision to others. Exceptionally, we may need to take proportionate action to limit these customers' contact with the Council. The Policy for Managing Unreasonable or Unacceptable Customer Behaviour sets out how we deal with unreasonable complainants and customers.

How we deal with compliments



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Compliments about our staff from customers will be logged and all staff will receive a letter of appreciation from their Director.

How we deal with suggestions

We will acknowledge suggestions and refer them for consideration to the appropriate service. Within 10 working days the service officer will advise the customer of action taken to implement the suggestion or give reasons why it cannot be implemented.

Policy Review

An informal review of the policy will happen every 12 months unless there is a specific change to processes or procedures within that given timeframe which require the policy to be amended.

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Appendix One - Adults Social Care complaints

The statutory social care procedures apply to complaints by an adult (or their representative) who receives or is entitled to receive an adult social care service. These are governed by The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations. We aim to respond to adults' social care complaints within 10 working days, but this may be extended in high risk complex cases.

Risk assessment

A risk assessment is conducted at the outset to determine who will respond to the complaint. In High Risk cases we will appoint an independent investigating officer, i.e. someone that does not work for Haringey Council or a senior manager independent of the service involved.

Advocacy

If there is an advocate, we will deal directly with them until the investigation into the complaint is completed. If the complainant does not have an advocate, we will consider whether an advocate should be appointed, depending on the vulnerability of the service user.

The Adjudicating Officer

In cases where an Independent Investigating officer has been appointed, the authority will appoint an Adjudicating Officer to consider the independent investigating officer's findings. The Adjudicating Officer will respond to the complainant explaining whether or not they accept the investigating officer's findings with clear explanations.

Escalation if complainant dissatisfied with response

This is a one stage procedure, if we are unable to resolve the issue and the customer remains dissatisfied, they may contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Appendix Two - Children and Young People Social Care complaints

The statutory social care procedures should be followed in complaints by a child or young person (or their representative) who receives or is entitled to receive a children's social care service. These are governed by the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

We will assess whether an advocate should be appointed, further information is available on the Haringey website.

Stage One (Local Resolution)

The stage one timescale for response is 10 working days, however this may be extended by up to a further 10 days to allow appointment of an advocate or if complex and likely to take more than 10 days

Stage Two

Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the first stage response, the complaint can be escalated. The request to escalate the complaint should take place within six months of receiving the first stage response. In some cases, the complainant and the authority can agree that the matter is not suitable for the local resolution stage and that it should be considered directly at the second stage.

The stage two timescale for response is 20 working days, however this may be extended to 65 working days in exceptional circumstances. The time starts from the date that a statement of complaint is agreed.

An Investigating Officer and an Independent Person will be appointed along with an adjudicating Officer who will consider their findings and respond to the complainant.



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Stage Three

Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the second stage response, they may escalate their complaint to Stage Three within 20 working days of the date of the stage two response. The Stage Three complaint is heard by an independent 3-person panel within 30 working days with the final outcome being considered by the Director who will respond to the complainant within 20 working days following this.