

Complaints Service Standard

When something goes wrong, we want to make it right – quickly, fairly and with care.

These are **our promises to you** when you make a complaint.

1. We will listen and take you seriously

- We will treat every **expression of dissatisfaction** as a complaint, no matter how it's made or what words you use.
- We will make it easy to complain – online, by phone, in person, or through someone you trust.
- We will always start by understanding **what has gone wrong** and what **outcome you want**.

2. We will make it easy to complain

- You will not need to **repeat your story**. We will forward your complaint to the right person straight away.
- We will provide support and **reasonable adjustments** for anyone who needs help to raise or pursue a complaint.
- Our complaints information will be **simple, visible and available in different formats and languages**.

3. We will respond promptly and fairly

- We will acknowledge your complaint **within 5 working days**.
- We will give you a full response **within 10 working days at Stage 1**.
- If you are still unhappy, you can ask for a Stage 2 review, which we will complete **within 20 working days**.
- If we need more time, we will tell you why and **agree a new timeframe with you**.
- You will always be **kept up to date** on the progress of your complaint.
- We will work closely with our colleagues across all teams to address **all areas of your complaint collaboratively**.

4. We will give you a clear and honest answer

Every response will:

- set out **what we investigated and what we found**
- explain our **decision and the reasons** behind it
- **include an apology** if we got something wrong
- tell you **what we will do to put it right and when**
- explain how to take your complaint to the **Housing Ombudsman** if you are still dissatisfied.



5. We will put things right when we've made a mistake

When we get it wrong, we will:

- **acknowledge the mistake** openly
- **apologise sincerely**
- **fix the issue** where we can
- offer a **fair and proportionate remedy** – which may include compensation where appropriate
- ensure **lessons are learned** so the same issue doesn't happen again.

6. We will treat everyone with respect

- You will be treated with **courtesy, empathy and fairness always**.
- We ask for the **same respect** in return **for our staff**.
- We will make sure any **restrictions** (for example, on communication where contact becomes unreasonable) are used **fairly, explained clearly, and reviewed regularly**.

7. We will learn and improve

- We will **record every complaint**, look for trends, and **use what we learn to improve our services**.
- We will **share what we have learned** in our Annual Complaints and Learning Report.
- We will **check our performance** each year against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and **publish our self-assessment**.
- We will **train all our staff** to see complaints as opportunities to improve, not criticisms to avoid.

8. We will be accountable and transparent

- Senior leaders and councillors will **regularly review complaints data, learning, and outcomes**.
- We will **make our performance visible** to residents and partners.

- We **welcome challenge** from the Housing Ombudsman and will **act on its findings**.

9. If you need to make a complaint

You can make a complaint through our online complaints process at  www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaints.

You can also submit a complaint by:

- sending a letter to  Hillingdon Council, Civic Centre, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW
- calling us on  01895 277800
- visiting  Hillingdon Council, Civic Centre, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW or speaking to one of our staff members.

If you're still not satisfied, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman by visiting  www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

10. We will keep this promise under review

These commitments will be **reviewed every year** to make sure they continue to meet residents' needs and reflect any updates to the **Housing Ombudsman's Code**.

We will **involve residents** in shaping future improvements to our complaints service.

Our aim:

To **make every complaint count** – to resolve issues fairly, learn from mistakes, and build better services for everyone in Hillingdon.