



Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure

Revised June 2026

1. Our complaint policy

Scope of our policy

This policy and procedure applies to all Council employees and to employees and organisations who deliver services on behalf of this Local Authority.

Introduction

The Council is committed to putting people at the centre of everything we do and aims to provide the best possible service to residents. However, sometimes things can go wrong and if you are not happy with the service you have received from the Council then please tell us so that we can, where possible, sort out the problem.

We will carry out enquiries fairly, deal with your complaint as quickly and effectively as we can while maintaining confidentiality and keeping you informed of progress. We want to reassure you that the service you get will not be affected if you raise concerns or make a complaint.

The policy and procedure:

- allows managers to address issues of unsatisfactory service and seek improvements in service delivery;
- ensures that people are treated fairly and consistently;
- ensures that a proper and adequate investigation takes place before any action is taken;
- requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered in line with the Equality Act 2010 and appropriate training is provided for staff; and
- safeguards the integrity and good reputation of the Council.

Whenever you contact us, we will:

- be polite and treat you with respect;
- give you honest and clear advice;
- make it clear what we can and cannot do;
- listen to your views; and
- admit when things go wrong and do our best to put them right.

What we ask you to do:

- treat us politely and with respect; and
- tell us when things go wrong so that we can put them right.

What is a complaint?

In general terms a complaint can be considered as: *“an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the council, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.”*

How can people complain?

Complaints can be made quickly and easily 24 hours a day, seven days a week via our website at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaints

You can also make a complaint:

- by **post** to the Complaint and Members Enquiry Team, London Borough of Hillingdon Council, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1UW
- by **telephone** by calling us on [01895 277800](tel:01895277800)
- **in person** by pre-agreed appointment only at: Hillingdon Council, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1UW

If you need help in using our online complaint form or need general advice on the complaint process, please call us on 01895 277800.

If you want more information about our complaint policy and general information relating to complaints, including the annual complaint report, this is published on our website at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaints. We also publish information about the complaint policy in our E-newsletter.

Who can complain?

Anyone who uses our services and is dissatisfied with the standard of service we have provided or our lack of action. The Council will also accept complaints by an advocate on behalf of a resident, with appropriate consent.

The Council will accept complaints received within 12 months of the issue/incident complained of or within 12 months when you became aware of the issue. Complaints made after this time limit may still be accepted if there are good reasons for the delay in submitting.

If we do not intend to progress your complaint, we will inform you of this in writing, tell you why we will not progress your complaint and give you the contact details of the Ombudsman to whom you may escalate your complaint for independent review.

What can people complain about?

People can complain about any **services** that the Council provides or contracts out. However, please note that:

- complaints relating to legal matters, including insurance claims, will still be considered but where formal legal proceedings have commenced, where the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim having been filed with the court, we will not progress such complaints through the complaint process; and.
- issues relating to employment or an application for employment with the Council, this cannot be addressed through the complaint procedure.

If we do not intend to progress your complaint, we will inform you of this in writing, tell you why we will not progress your complaint and give you the contact details of the Ombudsman to whom you may escalate your complaint for independent review.

Remedies for redress

The purpose of redress is to remedy the injustice or hardship suffered and where possible to return a complainant to the position they would have been before the situation went wrong. Types of redress include:

- Apologising;
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
- Taking action if there has been delay;
- Reconsidering or changing a decision;
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- Providing a financial remedy;
- Changing policies, procedures or practices.

Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent complaints

If we consider that a complainant is unreasonable or unreasonably persistent, we will refer the matter to a senior manager, who will consider whether restrictions should be placed on their contact with the Council.

2. The Corporate Complaints Procedure

Our complaints procedure is designed to support the effective management of complaints and is set out below. This means that whenever someone expresses dissatisfaction (it is not necessary to use the word “complaint”) we will give them the choice to submit a complaint including if it is submitted via a

third party or their representative, and any such complaint received will be handled in line with our published complaint policy. Please note that we will not stop our efforts to address the service request even if you decide to complain. If you are dissatisfied with our response to your service request, we will raise a complaint, even if the service request is ongoing.

SERVICE REQUESTS

Service requests are not complaints, but they will still be recorded, monitored, and regularly reviewed. However, for services that fall within the jurisdiction of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, we may choose to treat your complaint by way of a service request, as they do give organisations the opportunity to deal with a service request before a complaint is made.

We will acknowledge receipt of your service request within five working days, give you a timescale when we will respond to you and detailing the action we have or will be taking to put things right.

COMPLAINT STAGES

STAGE 1 (Investigation)

A complaint will be registered under Stage 1 of our complaint's procedure when:

- you tell us that you are dissatisfied with the service you have received
- we believe it is necessary to use the complaint procedure
- If we receive related complaints before we send the Stage 1 response, they will be included in that response. However, if the new issues are unrelated to the complaint being investigated, or if it would unreasonably delay the stage 1 response to incorporate them, they will be treated as a new Stage 1 complaint.

Complaints at Stage 1 will be investigated by a manager or Team Leader or specialist complaint officer, from the service you have complained about, who was not directly involved in the reason for your complaint. We will respond to your complaint as soon as we have the answers to your complaint, and we will not delay our response while outstanding actions are completed. Any outstanding actions will be tracked, actioned promptly and updates provided to you by the service area.

If you are not happy with the response you receive, the full response will tell you how to escalate your complaint to Stage 2.

Prior to that, we will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days of receipt, set out our understanding of the complaint, the outcome(s)

you are seeking and what (if any) aspects of your complaint we will not be investigating. We will provide you with a full response to your complaint at Stage 1 within 10 working days of our acknowledgment. If this is not possible, due to the complexity of the case, we will write to you and let you know if more time is needed, the reason why more time is needed, the estimated time it will take to provide a full response and the contact details of the relevant ombudsman. Any extension will not be more than 10 working days without good reason. If this is the case, and we are unable to respond within the extended timeframe, we will agree with you how and when we will provide updates on the progress of your complaint.

STAGE 2 (Review)

You can ask us to review your complaint at Stage 2 if:

- you are unhappy with how your complaint was handled at Stage 1
- you are unhappy with the response you have received

In your appeal it would be helpful if you say why you are dissatisfied with the response and what further action you expect but you are not required to explain your reasons for requesting a stage 2 review.

Complaints at Stage 2 will be investigated by a Head of Service or Director, who will review how your complaint was dealt with originally to decide if:

- the complaint was investigated thoroughly and objectively
- the conclusions reached are based on evidence
- the response was reasonable, appropriate and tried to achieve a resolution

Please be assured that we will respond to your request for review as soon as we have the answers to the issues raised, and we will not delay our response while outstanding actions are completed. Any outstanding actions will be tracked, actioned promptly and updates provided to you by the service area.

If you are unhappy with the response you receive, the full response will tell you how to escalate your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for independent review.

Prior to that, we will acknowledge your request for a review at Stage 2 of the Corporate complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received, set out our understanding of your review request, the outcome(s) you are seeking and what (if any) aspects of your review request we will not be investigating. We will provide you with a full response to your complaint at Stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being

acknowledged and if we cannot finish our review in time, we will tell you when you can expect our response, the reason why an extension is needed and the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman. Any extension will not be more than 20 working days without good reason. If this is the case, and we are unable to respond within the extended timeframe due to the complexity of the case, we will agree with you how and when we will provide updates on the progress of your complaint.

TAKING YOUR COMPLAINT FURTHER

If your complaint is about the Landlord Service (housing management matters), (but not Lettings/Housing allocations) your complaint will be considered by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

A. Housing Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman Service is set up by law to look at complaints about registered providers of social housing and their service is free, independent and impartial. The contact details of the Housing Ombudsman are:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 1484
Unit D
Preston
PR2 0ET

Telephone 0300 111 3000

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

B. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

If your complaint is about any other Council service including Lettings and Housing allocations, your complaint will be considered by the LGSCO. The contact details of the LGSCO are:

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website contact: www.lgo.org.uk/contact-us