

# Redditch Borough Council

## Complaints Policy

# Complaints Handling Policy

We aim to provide an excellent service at all times. However, there will be times when we don't get it right and you may feel that you wish to make a complaint.

## 1. Objectives

We aim for our complaints procedure to be:-

- Open, easily accessible, well publicised and available in other formats if required.
- Simple to use and understand.
- Confidential - for staff and customers.
- Quick - responding to complaints promptly within the agreed timescales.
- Informative of the progress of a complaint.
- Comprehensive - dealing with all issues raised by customers and give an effective reply and appropriate remedy.
- Fair for customers and staff - all complaints will be investigated thoroughly and objectively with the provision for an independent review.
- Flexible, the objective being to resolve problems rather than just follow a series of steps.

## 2. What does this procedure cover?

**A failure** to provide information or give the correct information

**An unsatisfactory** level of service, including delays and non delivery of service.

**A failure** to follow the Council's agreed policies and procedures.

**The behaviour** of staff or contractors employed by the Council.

**Discrimination** and/or harassment by staff.

**NB** If you are unhappy about a Council policy you should contact your local Councillor.

### **3. Who can complain?**

Any person or organisation receiving or seeking to receive a service from the Council or its contractors.

Any person acting on behalf of an individual or group of individuals (this includes Councillors, MP's, advice agencies and other advocacy groups).

### **4. How do you complain?**

**You can make a complaint in person, in writing, by email, by telephone or by filling in a Compliments, Comments and Complaints form available by telephoning any member of staff, or from any Council building or on the Council website, [www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk).**

**If you need help in making your complaint, contact any member of Council staff.**

### **5. How does the Procedure work?**

#### ***Stage 1***

If you are dissatisfied with a service or with the way you have been treated, you should tell us what you believe went wrong, who dealt with your problem or issue and what you would like us to do to put it right. The Head of Service or Director responsible for the service will make sure that your complaint is dealt with and a full investigation carried out.

We aim to acknowledge your 1<sup>st</sup> stage complaint within 2 working days of receiving it and aim to provide a full response by your preferred method of contact within 10 working days. If this is not possible we will contact you to let you know when you can expect to receive a full response. You will be given contact details for the person who is dealing with your complaint should you wish to contact them.

### **Stage 2**

If you are unhappy with the response you have received, you can ask for the Chief Executive to review your complaint.

We aim to acknowledge your 2<sup>nd</sup> stage complaint within 2 working days of receiving it and aim to provide a full response by your preferred method of contact within 10 working days. If this is not possible we will contact you to let you know when you can expect to receive a full response.

### **Stage 3**

If at the end of stage 2, you are still dissatisfied, you can ask for your complaint to be heard by a Panel of elected Councillors. Councillors have powers to overturn decisions and make recommendations in regard to financial or service based compensation, in circumstances where it is considered appropriate to do so.

Councillors appeals (stage 3) will be acknowledged within 2 working days and you will be advised of further actions

## **6. Remedies**

We will provide an appropriate remedy to resolve complaints in discussion with you the complainant.

This could be:-

1. An apology.
2. An explanation of actions taken.
3. Remedial action, e.g. undertaking repairs.
4. Compensation in appropriate cases which may be financial or service based.

## **7. Vexatious or repetitious complaints**

There are times when complaints are considered to be repetitious or vexatious. If a complaint is considered to be deliberately repetitious or vexatious it may not be necessary to carry out an investigation, particularly if the

complainant has exhausted the complaints procedure and the complaint has not been upheld. If this is the case a service Director will explain why no further action will be taken unless there is a new complaint.

### **8. Other Complaints**

There are some areas which are not covered by this complaints procedure. These include:

**Complaints about matters for which the Council is not responsible.** These will be acknowledged and referred to the relevant body.

**Complaints that are the subject of legal proceedings or are being referred to the Council's insurers.**

**Complaints about service where an appeals procedure already exists are not covered by the corporate complaints procedure. These complaints will be acknowledged and referred to the relevant officers as detailed below:-**

**Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit appeals.** If a person believes that they have not been awarded the correct amount of Housing/Council Tax Benefit. For more information contact Benefits Manager

**Planning Appeals.** If a planning application is refused by the Council the applicant may appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment. For more information contact the Head of Planning and Building Control.

**Job Applications.** If a job applicant is unhappy with the way that their application has been dealt with they should contact Human Resources. For more information contact Head of Human Resources.

**Employment Matters.** Complaints by staff about employment matters. These are dealt with under the Council's grievance procedures. For more information contact the Head of Human Resources

**Insurance Claims.** May be received as part of a complaint in which case the Insurance Officers should be notified and the complainant informed that the details will

be passed to our insurers. For more information contact Financial Services Manager

**Neighbour Harassment** should be dealt with under existing procedures. The complaints procedure would only be utilised if the resident complained that the Council's response was inadequate. Visit your local One Stop Shop.

**Licensing issues** are dealt with by the Licensing Sub-Committee. If applicants are unhappy with the decision of the Council they can take the matter to the Magistrates Court. For more information contact Legal Services Manager.

**Housing Appeals.** The Council has a 2 stage appeals procedure for both Housing Registrations and Homelessness Applications.

- **Housing Registrations.** You can appeal against a decision not to accept you onto the Council's Housing Register; you can also appeal against decisions relating to your housing application or offers of accommodation which have been made which you believe to be unsuitable.
- **Homelessness.** If you are a homeless applicant you can request a review of any decisions relating to your homelessness application, offers of accommodation or suitability of accommodation made by the Council.

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of your appeal decision there is a 2nd stage appeal which is held by Councillors.

To make an appeal you must put a request in writing to the Housing Options Manager.

### **Complaints against Councillors**

If you wish to complain about the conduct of Councillor, you have to complain in writing to the Standards Board.

### **Address for submission of a written complaint against a Councillor**

The Chairman of the Assessment Sub-Committee  
c/o Sue Mullins, Monitoring Officer  
Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall,

Walter Stranz Square, Redditch,  
Worcestershire, B98 8AH

Tel: 01527 64252 Ext. 3210

Fax: 01527 65216

E-mail: [sue.mullins@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:sue.mullins@redditchbc.gov.uk)

In the event of it being a serious complaint, it may be referred by the Standards Committee to the Standards Board for England for investigation and, for less serious matters, it may be referred to the Council's Monitoring Officer for investigation or other appropriate action (e.g. training / conciliation).

**FLOWCHART OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**





