

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Complaints, what you can expect.

If you are not happy with the service that you have received from Bromsgrove District Council you can make a complaint to any officer by phone, e-mail, letter or face to face, leaving your contact details if you complain verbally.

Our aim is to make sure that your complaint is:

- dealt with efficiently;
- investigated properly;
- dealt with in confidence, if requested;

You can expect to:

- know the outcome of an investigation;
- have the outcome documented in plain English, without the use of technical jargon, if required (it may be possible to satisfy your complaint verbally);
- receive an apology if we have made a mistake;
- be informed of any changes we have made as a result of the complaint;

This policy does not affect the right of any individual to approach a Local Councillor or their Member of Parliament.

Acknowledgement, timescales and responses

We do not set a timescale for dealing with complaints because we will always try to resolve them immediately or as quickly as possible. Outlined below are the steps we will follow.

A complaint will be assigned to a manager, who will contact you immediately, preferably by phone or face to face, to ensure that we understand your complaint. The manager may be able to answer your complaint immediately and you may be satisfied after this initial response.

If the manager needs to investigate your complaint, they will let you know and:

- talk to you about what the next steps will be;
- discuss with you the likely timescale needed to investigate your complaint and respond;
- let you know the outcome as soon as possible

It will not be longer than three weeks before we respond to you and we will send you written confirmation of the outcome, if you request it. On many occasions a written response may not be required, if we have discussed the complaint outcomes with you, to your satisfaction.

Complex complaints

Some more complex complaints may take longer to investigate fully, especially if other parties are involved. In this case, we will explain to you how long that is likely to be (and why) and tell you when you can expect a full response. It is unlikely that any investigation will take longer than five weeks but we will keep you informed of any reason why it is taking longer than expected and review the response date with you.

We will:

- ensure that your complaint is fully investigated;
- Answer your complaint fully; and
- be clear about any actions that we have taken or will take as a result.

Any serious complaints, which may have wider implications for the Council, or which may suggest staff misconduct, will be brought to the attention to the Director and Chief Executive.

What you can do next

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, or if you feel that it has not been handled properly or dealt with within acceptable timescales, you can ask for it to be reviewed by the relevant Head of Service.

If you are still unhappy after this review, you can take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, [the LGO], which is a free service that looks at complaints about councils and investigates them in a fair and independent way.

The LGO will not consider a complaint before the Council has first been given an opportunity to respond to it.

Alternative route for complaints about Council services

Some complaints, for example appeals against decisions made by the Benefits or Planning departments may need to be dealt with by going through a different process. If your enquiry / complaint is one of these, the officer who takes your enquiry / complaint will make you aware and ensure that it is passed through to the right department.

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