

Haringey Council Feedback Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Haringey Council is committed to providing excellent services to our residents, business owners and visitors. We understand that sometimes things can go wrong, and we welcome feedback to rectify mistakes, learn from them and improve our services.
- 1.2. This policy outlines our commitment to effectively handle complaints in line with the current Ombudsman guidance:
 - [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints handling code](#).
 - [Housing Ombudsman complaints handling code](#).
- 1.3. Additionally, this policy addresses how we will handle compliments and suggestions.

2. Scope

- 2.1. 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, representatives, or advocacy workers.

3. Definition of a Service Request

- 3.1. Haringey Council has adopted the Ombudsman's definition of a service request which is:

“a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision”.
- 3.2. If a resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to a service request, this will be treated as a complaint. The Council will continue to address the service request while the complaint is investigated.

4. Definition of a complaint

- 4.1. Haringey Council has adopted the Ombudsman's definition of a complaint which is:

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.”
- 4.2. A resident does not need to use the word “complaint” for their concern to be treated as one. Any expression of dissatisfaction, regardless of the language used or the method of communication, will be considered a complaint and handled in accordance with this policy.
- 4.3. Residents who express dissatisfaction will be given the option to have their concern formally treated as a complaint. This applies regardless of the language used or the method of communication.
- 4.4. In this policy the term ‘resident’ denotes an individual or group of individuals, including council tenants, council leaseholders, council licensees, and service users.

5. Principles

- 5.1. Our complaints handling process adheres to the following principles:
 - **Fairness:** We will treat all complainants with fairness, impartiality, and respect, regardless of their background or circumstances.
 - **Transparency:** We will be transparent in our communication and provide clear information about the complaint process.
 - **Accountability:** We will take responsibility for addressing complaints promptly and effectively.
 - **Accessibility:** We will ensure that our complaints procedure is accessible to all residents, including those with disabilities or language barriers.
 - **Learning and Improvement:** We view complaints as opportunities for learning and improving our services.

6. Making a complaint

- 6.1. A simple enquiry, request or report of a single service failure will not be recorded as a complaint (e.g. a report of a missed bin collection, streetlight not working, or repair being needed). This is because such issues can usually be put right reasonably quickly and without detailed investigation.
- 6.2. Matters excluded from our complaints policy are set out in section 7 below
- 6.3. Complaints relating to Adult Social Care and/or Children and Young Peoples' Social Care are dealt with under different regulations and are set out in [Appendix One and Two](#).
- 6.4. Residents can make complaints through various channels including:

- Online: [Via our official website](#).
- Email: feedback@haringey.gov.uk
- Phone: 0208 489 3424
- In Person:

Customer Service Centres based in two locations:

Marcus Garvey Library & Customer Service Centre,
Tottenham Green Pools and Fitness,
1 Philip Lane,
Tottenham, N15 4JA

Wood Green Customer Service Centre (located within Wood Green Library)
187-197A High Road,
Wood Green, N22 6XD

- In Writing:
Feedback and Resolutions Team,
Alexandra House, 10 Station Road,
Wood Green, N22 7TR.

6.5. Complaints must include:

- The resident's name and contact details.
- A clear description of the issue.
- Any supporting evidence if available.

6.6. We recognise some residents may need additional support with submitting complaints, and in those circumstances, we will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to simplify the process.

7. Matters not addressed under this policy

- 7.1. If Haringey Council determines a complaint does not fall within the scope of this policy, an explanation will be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why.
- 7.2. Complainants retain the right to challenge this decision by escalating their complaint to the relevant Ombudsman, as advised in our response. The Ombudsman may instruct the Council to accept the complaint where appropriate.
- 7.3. Exclusions:
 - The commencement or conduct of legal proceedings.
 - Matters of law or central government policy.
 - Personnel matters, including an employee appointments, removals, pay, discipline, or pension.
 - Where there is an alternative appeal process before a court or tribunal, e.g. about the refusal of planning permission, school admissions or exclusions, housing benefit, penalty charge notices, contractors or suppliers disputing invoices, terms of contracts or alleging a breach of contract.
 - Matters already decided by a court, tribunal or ombudsman ruling.

- Complaints involving insurance claims against the council (unless they are about how a service has communicated with a customer about an insurance claim, e.g. they have delayed sending information)
- Data protection breaches.
- Freedom of information / environmental information requests.
- Complaints relating to Child Protection Conferences, which are referred to the Haringey Safeguarding Children Partnership. Such complaints may be about:
 - the process of the conference.
 - the outcome; and/or
 - a decision about a child protection plan.
- Complaints about Children and Young People's Social Care which are dealt with under a separate statutory procedure.
- Adult Social Care complaints that are dealt with under a separate statutory procedure.
- Disputes between tenants unless directly related to the handling of the dispute.
- Complaints about Councillors, which are handled separately by the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee.
- Matters outside the designated time frame or are beyond the Council's control.

8. Use of advocate or support person and consent

- 8.1. Residents may choose to have an advocate or support person to assist with their complaint. Written consent is required if the resident wants the Council to liaise directly with the support person or advocate.
- 8.2. Haringey Council will:
 - Aim to simplify the consent process.
 - Ensure the process does not make it difficult for someone to make a complaint.
- 8.3. If written consent cannot be given, alternative options for obtaining consent or responding to the issue will be considered.
- 8.4. Complaints submitted via Elected Members (Councillors or MPs) will be logged as a Member Enquiry in the first instance. Should the Elected Member or their Constituent remain unhappy with the response, they will have the ability to escalate their enquiry to Stage 2 of the complaints process as referenced in 9.3 of this policy. There is no requirement to restart the complaints process. Information about the relevant Ombudsman will be provided to support further escalation if needed.

9. Complaints Handling Procedure

- 9.1. Our complaints handling procedure comprises two stages:
- 9.2. Stage 1 – Service Investigation
 - Upon receiving a complaint, we will acknowledge, log and define it within 5 working days and will provide a reference number.
 - When acknowledging a complaint, we will:
 - Set out our understanding of the complaint.
 - Clarify the outcomes the resident is seeking.
 - Identify which aspects the Council is and is not responsible for.
 - Request clarification if any part of the complaint is unclear.
 - The complaint is assigned to the relevant department for investigation and resolution. The Council will issue a full written response to Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.
 - If a resident raises additional related issues during the investigation and the Stage 1 response has not yet been issued, these will be incorporated into the response. If the issues are unrelated or would cause unreasonable delay, they will be logged as a new complaint.
 - A complaint response will be issued when the answer is known, even if outstanding actions remain. These actions will be tracked and updates provided to the resident until completion.
 - Disagreement with Council policy is addressed at this stage of the procedure only.
 - Complaints about staff members are investigated by the officer's line manager.

There is only one internal stage.

- Where the complaint relates to a third-party contractor, we will refer the complaint to them to undertake the service investigation.

9.3. Stage 2 – Review

- If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction at Stage 1, you can request the complaint be reviewed at Stage 2.
- Residents are not required to justify their request for escalation. We will make reasonable efforts to understand why the complainant remains dissatisfied.
- Stage 2 complaints will be reviewed by someone who was not involved in the Stage 1 investigation to ensure impartiality.
- Stage 2 complaints will be acknowledged, defined, and logged within five working days of receipt of the escalation request.
- When acknowledging a complaint, we will:
 - Set out our understanding of the complaint.
 - Clarify the outcomes the resident is seeking.
 - Identify which aspects the Council is and is not responsible for.
 - Request clarification if any part of the complaint is unclear.
- The Council will issue a full written response to Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.
- A complaint response will be issued when the answer is known, even if outstanding actions remain. These actions will be tracked and updates provided to the resident until completion.

9.4. Extensions

- If a response cannot be provided within the standard timescale (Stage 1 or Stage 2), we will:
 - Inform the resident of the reason for the delay.
 - Agree suitable intervals for providing updates.
 - Ensure any extension does not exceed 10 working days (Stage 1) or 20 working days (Stage 2) without good reason.
 - Provide contact details for the Ombudsman when informing the complainant of the extension.

9.5. Review by the Ombudsman

- If dissatisfied after Stage 2, the complainant can escalate the complaint to the relevant Ombudsman for an independent review.

9.6. Although residents can complain directly to the Ombudsman at any point, completing the Council's complaints process first is encouraged.

10. Time limits for complaints

10.1. Haringey Council will not normally accept complaints made after 12 months, but exceptions may apply in exceptional circumstances.

10.2. An explanation for the delay with supporting evidence will normally be required.

10.3. Factors considered include:

- Council responsibility for the delay;
- Personal circumstances of the complainant; and
- Any disability or vulnerability contributing to the delay

10.4. Requests to escalate complaints to Stage 2 should be made within 6 months of the Stage 1 response.

11. Right to withdraw a complaint

11.1. Residents have the right to withdraw a complaint at any time.

11.2. Please contact the Feedback & Resolutions Team to withdraw your complaint.

12. Complaints made directly to the Chief Executive

12.1. Complaints raised directly with the Chief Executive are forwarded to the Feedback & Resolutions Team for acknowledgement and handling under the complaints process.

12.2. This ensures all complaints receive equitable treatment and access to the relevant Ombudsman if dissatisfied with the outcome.

13. Compliments & Suggestions

- 13.1. We value compliments received from residents when an officer has demonstrated exceptional service that is beyond their daily duties. Officers receiving compliments will be recognised with a letter of appreciation from their Head of Service.
- 13.2. Our preferred method for receiving compliments or suggestions is through our [e- form](#).
- 13.3. We acknowledge that not all residents may have access to this, so we will accept compliments and suggestions through the contact methods outlined in section 6.4 above.
- 13.4. We make reasonable adjustments to support residents who are unable to use alternative means of communication.
- 13.5. Suggestions received will be acknowledged, and appropriate action will be taken within 10 working days. The service officer will update the customer on the implementation of the suggestion or give reasons if it cannot be implemented.

14. Equality & Diversity

- 14.1. Equality and diversity are of fundamental importance to services provided regardless of a person's protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, religion, pregnancy and maternity, race, belief, or sex).
- 14.2. All must be treated with respect.
- 14.3. The Council treats everyone it houses, serves, and employs, fairly, and encourages others to do the same.
- 14.4. This policy provides assurance that compensation is offered in a fair and consistent way.

15. Data Protection

- 15.1. The Council is committed to ensure that data is:
- 15.2. Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.
- 15.3. Collected for a specific and legitimate purpose and not used for anything other than this stated purpose.
- 15.4. Relevant and limited to whatever the requirements are for which the data is processed.
- 15.5. Accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date. Any identified inaccuracies will be amended or removed without undue delay.
- 15.6. Stored for as long as required, as specified within the Retention Policy.
- 15.7. Secured with appropriate solutions, which protect against unauthorised or unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction, or damage.

16. Monitoring & Reporting

- 16.1. The Council has a responsibility to report on its complaints processes, including the number of complaints received, response times, and outcomes.
- 16.2. The Council will publish its annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code, including any areas of non-compliance, actions taken, and timelines for improvement. This ensures transparency and accountability in our complaint handling service.
- 16.3. This information will be made publicly available.

17. Training & Development

- 17.1. Our staff will receive training on complaint handling, ensuring they are equipped to handle complaints effectively and in line with Ombudsman complaints handling codes.

18. Implementation & review

- 18.1. This policy will be implemented on 30th September 2025.
- 18.2. It will be reviewed every three years to ensure its effectiveness and relevance in addressing residents' needs and concerns, or sooner to incorporate legislative and/or regulatory amendments, best practice developments, or to address any operational issues identified with the process.
- 18.3. Next review date by September 2028.
- 18.4. This policy is published on the Haringey website.

19. Appendices

19.1 Appendix One - Complaints about Adult Social Care

Appendix One - Complaints about Adult Social Care

1. How we will deal with your complaint

We will:

1. write to you to acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.

- b. Assign your complaint to the relevant service or authority, who will conduct an investigation into your complaint.
 - c. offer to discuss your complaint with you and explain how the complaint will be investigated.
 - d. respond to your complaint with our decision in writing, where possible we will do this within 10 working days.
2. If you have an advocate
 - a. If you have an advocate (someone who represents you), we will deal directly with them until the investigation into the complaint is completed. If you don't have an advocate, we will consider whether to appoint one.
3. High risk cases
 - a. In high-risk cases, we will appoint an independent investigating officer. This is someone who:
 - does not work for us
 - is independent of the service involved
 - b. In these cases, we will appoint an adjudicating officer to consider the independent investigating officer's findings. The adjudicating officer will respond to you explaining whether or not they accept the investigating officer's findings with clear explanations.
 - c. The timescale may be extended in high risk or complex cases, and we will write to let you know if that is the case.
4. If we are unable to resolve the issue
 - a. If we are unable to resolve the issue and you remain dissatisfied with the response, you can contact the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#). We will provide the relevant contact details when we respond to the complaint.

Appendix Two - Complaints about Children's Social Care

If you are a young person, you can get help with your complaint by contacting [Barnardo's – advocacy services in Haringey](#).

They help young people who want to complain about children's social care services. You can also ask

us to contact the organisations on your behalf.

1. How we will deal with your complaint
 - a. There are 3 stages to how we deal with your complaint.
2. Stage 1 – local problem solving
 - a. When we receive your complaint, we will try to sort out the problem straight away. If we can't, we will ask a senior manager to investigate and respond to you within 10 working days.
3. Stage 2 – the formal stage
 - a. An independent investigating officer will investigate your complaint.
 - b. The investigator will meet with you so that they can fully understand your complaint before they start the investigation.
 - c. An independent person will also be appointed to make sure that your concerns are taken seriously and that you are treated fairly.
 - d. The investigation should normally take between 25 to 65 working days.
4. Stage 3 – the review panel
 - a. A review panel meeting will consider your complaint, which you will be invited to.
 - b. The panel will be 3 independent people who will hear your complaint and consider how it can be resolved.
 - c. You have the right to bring an advocate or representative to speak on your behalf.
5. If we are unable to resolve the issue
 - a. If we are unable to resolve the issue and you remain dissatisfied with the response, you can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. We will provide the relevant contact details when we respond to the complaint.