

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Corporate Complaints Procedure



www.rotherham.gov.uk

HOW TO CONTACT US

If you have a complaint, suggestion or compliment you can contact us in a number of ways:

Via the online form on the Council website: www.rotherham.gov.uk/complaints

Email: complaints@rotherham.gov.uk

By post: Using a complaint form or by letter.

No postage is required for posting forms or letters to us, as you may use our freepost address below.

FREEPOST RTCT-XKLS-ZHAZ

The Complaints Manager

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Riverside House

Main Street

Rotherham

S60 1AE

By telephone: 01709 382121. The customer service representative handing your call will direct you to the appropriate department.

By text: 07860 021 447

In person: At one of our Customer Service Centres or any Council reception point.

YOUR COMPLAINTS

If we have failed to provide a service to you or if you are dissatisfied with the service that you have received, then please tell us. In most cases we hope to be able to resolve these with the member of staff you have been dealing with and will use your feedback to help us make improvements. Where this is not possible, we have a formal complaints process to fully consider your complaint.

Please note that Adult Social Care, Children and Young Peoples, and Housing Services have a separate procedure as determined by the Government.

THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Who can complain?

Anyone who feels that they have had a poor service from us, or from someone providing the service for us, and have tried to get the problem solved by speaking to someone in the relevant department.

If you complain to us but feel you can't give us your name, we will not deal with your complaint under the complaints procedure. However, we will ensure steps are taken to deal with the issue.

What is a complaint?

You make a complaint when you are not happy with the standard of service you have had from us.

We will not treat certain issues as complaints, and where this is the case, we will tell you. For example:

- If you ask us for a service – such as reporting a faulty streetlight that needs attention
- If you ask us for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice – such as a request for information on our winter gritting policy for icy roads and pavements
- Any issue that is being dealt with in court – such as where we are pursuing legal action against someone in the magistrates' court for giving a false trade description

What happens then?

You can make an official complaint in one of the ways described on page 2.

We will always treat your complaint as confidential, and will deal with it as follows:

Stage 1: Response from the line manager

- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days of receiving it
- You will receive a full response within ten working days, and where this is not possible, we will send you a letter explaining reasons for the delay and give a date when you can expect a full response

Stage 2: Investigation by senior independent officer

- We will acknowledge receipt of your letter within three working days of receiving it
- We will give you the name and phone number of the complaints officer who is investigating your complaint. This will not be the same person who has investigated stage 1 of your complaint, and will work independently of the service area involved in your complaint
- The officer will contact you to arrange an interview so they can talk to you about your complaint and find out what you think we should do to put it right
- The officer will investigate your complaint in line with our 'Good Practice Guidelines for Investigating Officers' and write a report on their findings
- They will send the report to the suitable Director to make a decision
- You will receive a full written response within 25 working days of us receiving your letter, or we will tell you about any delay and give you a new date for when you should receive a response
- The response will give you the chance to send your complaint to the final stage of the complaints procedure should you so wish
- Please write back within one month of receiving the response saying why you want to go to stage 3

Stage 3: Complaints review panel meeting

- We will acknowledge receipt of your letter within three working days of receiving it
- A member of our Democratic Services will contact you within five working days of receiving the letter, and will arrange for your complaint to be heard by an appeals panel
- A date will be set for the hearing within 20 working days of your letter, but at a time that is convenient for you to attend

We will send you a summary of your complaint which will:

- Outline the complaint
- Say how you want the complaint to be solved
- Detail the steps we have already taken to solve the complaint; and
- Contain the Director's views.

We will also send this report to the members of the panel.

- You may bring a friend, adviser, or interpreter who may speak for you, but they should not be a lawyer who is working for you
- We will send you a note to explain the panel's procedures before the meeting

- The panel will include three Councillors and someone from our Legal Services team, who will act as clerk to the panel
- You will have copies of any relevant letters or evidence that will be put before the panel so that you can respond to any questions they may ask
- You will receive a full written report of the panel’s decision within five working days of the hearing

SOLUTIONS

If your complaint is accepted, the service involved will try to solve the problem by doing the following:

- Apologising to you and explaining what went wrong
- Providing the service you are entitled to receive
- Changing procedures so that the mistake is not repeated

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN

If you are not satisfied with how we have handled your complaint then you may wish to complain directly to the Local Government Ombudsman. Their contact details are below. Please note that the ombudsman will not act until any complaint has been considered under the Council’s complaint procedure.

By post: PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

By telephone: 0300 061 0614 **Online form:** <https://complaints.lgo.org.uk/complaint-form/>