

OADBY & WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY



Policy Owner: Head of Customer Service and Transformation
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Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Contents

	Page Number
PART 1.0: Purpose	3
PART 2.0: Compliments	3
PART 3.0: Comments	3
PART 4.0: Complaints	4

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent process for customers who wish to make a compliment, comment or complaint. It also provides guidance for staff so that compliments, comments and complaints are dealt with consistently and fairly.

This policy applies to all employees working for the Council including agency staff and contractors working for the Council whilst engaged on Council business. In some instances, the Council may have specified in contracts that suppliers will be expected to deal with level 1 complaints made against them in the first instance, in which case the complaint will be forwarded to the contractor and they will be expected to deal with the complaint accordingly.

Complaints about elected members will be dealt with separately through the Members Code of Conduct and should be made in the same way as other complaints against the council. These complaints will be referred to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

2.0 Compliments

We want you to let us know when we are doing things well. It's good for our staff to know that people appreciate their work. It also enables us to identify areas of best practice and share them across the Council. So, if you would like to praise an individual, team or service please tell us.

You can register a compliment by any of the following methods:

- By completing our online form https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/compliments_comments_and_complaints_policy_and_form
- By emailing our Customer Service Team customerservices@oadby-wigston.gov.uk with the details of your compliment
- By telephoning our Customer Service Team on 0116 288 8961
- By writing to the Compliance Team at Council Offices, Bushloe House, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2DR with the details of your compliment

We will feedback compliments to the individuals/teams concerned and where appropriate, share best practice across the Council.

3.0 Comments

We are interested in the views of our residents. Comments give us ideas about improving our services and providing value for money. A comment is a suggestion, idea or observation about an area of our service.

You can register your comments by any of the following methods:

- By completing our online form https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/compliments_comments_and_complaints_policy_and_form
- By emailing our Customer Service Team customerservices@oadby-wigston.gov.uk with the details of your comments
- By telephoning our Customer Service Team on 0116 288 8961
- By writing to the Compliance Team at Council Offices, Bushloe House, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire with the details of your comments

We will carefully consider how we use any comments to improve the way we deliver our services.

4.0 Complaints

Complaints usually arise where the complainant perceives that the Council has failed to:

- provide the standard or quality of service promised
- follow its own policies
- respond promptly to an enquiry or request for service
- treat a customer fairly or with courtesy

An initial service request i.e. reporting a missed bin collection or a noise nuisance will not be treated as a complaint.

Where a customer has a statutory right of appeal against a decision this will not be treated as a complaint for example, where planning permission has been refused, where you do not agree with the outcome of a Benefit application or when you do not agree with the banding of your property for Council Tax.

In these circumstances if you are not sure how to proceed please contact our Customer Service Team on 0116 288 8961 who will be able to advise you of the correct process to report an issue or how to appeal a decision.

Making a complaint

You can make a complaint by any of the following methods:

- By completing our online form https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/compliments_comments_and_complaints_policy_and_form
- By emailing our Customer Service Team customerservices@oadby-wigston.gov.uk with the details of your complaint
- By writing to the Compliance Team at Council Offices, Bushloe House, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire with the details of your complaint

Anonymous complaints

We will still accept and act on anonymous complaints even though it will not be possible to request further information or clarification or provide a response to the complainant.

Complaints made through third party representatives

Complainants may ask a third party representative to act on their behalf when making a complaint. We will accept complaints from third party representatives but we will seek confirmation that the complainant has given their permission for the third party representative to act on their behalf. The complainant can withdraw their permission at any time.

Vexatious or unreasonably persistent complaints

In a minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way that is unreasonable. They may behave unacceptably, or be unreasonably persistent in their contacts and submission of information. This can impede investigating their complaint (or complaints by others) and can have a significant resource issue for the Council.

Where complaints are made in what is deemed to be an aggressive, abusive and/or vexatious or in an unreasonably persistent manner and the Council is satisfied that:

- the complaint has been investigated properly
- any decision reached is the right one
- communications with the complainant have been adequate, and
- the complainant is not now providing any significant new information that might affect the Council's view on the complaint

a letter will be sent by the Head of Service responsible for the service area from where the complaint originates to inform the complainant that their behaviour is considered unacceptable and that no further correspondence in respect of the complaint will be entered into.

How we will deal with your complaint

All complaints will be registered in the Council's Complaints Log.

If we think it is appropriate we will try to resolve your complaint by an informal discussion. If an informal discussion is not considered appropriate or required or an informal discussion does not bring about a resolution the complaint will escalate to Level 1.

There are three levels to a complaint:

Level 1 complaint

When a complaint is received an acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant or their representative within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint.

A level 1 complaint will be dealt with by a senior officer in the service area to which the complaint refers.

A full and detailed response will be sent to the complainant within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint unless additional time is needed to investigate your complaint in which case we will let you know.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the Level 1 complaint they can raise a Level 2 complaint.

Level 2 complaint

A Level 2 complaint must include fully the reasons the complainant is not satisfied with the Level 1 complaint response.

A Level 2 complaint will be reviewed by a senior officer of the Council who has had no prior involvement with the complaint.

When a Level 2 complaint is received, an acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant or their representative within 5 working days of receipt of the Level 2 complaint.

A full and detailed response will be sent to the complainant within 15 working days of receipt of the Level 2 complaint unless additional time is needed to investigate your complaint in which case we will let you know.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the response to the Level 2 complaint they can escalate their complaint to a Level 3 complaint which will be dealt with by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Level 3 complaint

Before making a complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman a complainant should go through all the stages of the Council's complaints procedure.

You can escalate a complaint to the Ombudsman if:

- your problem has not been put right
- you have not had a response within a reasonable time

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is the final stage for complaints about councils. There is a free service and they will investigate your complaint in a fair and independent way.

You can find out more about the service the Ombudsman provides and how to make a complaint to them by visiting their website <https://www.lgo.org.uk/> or by phoning them on 0300 061 0614.

