

# Compliments, comments and complaints

## Compliments and suggestions for improvement

Everyone likes a pat on the back and Council employees are no different. If you have been impressed by the way we have provided our services, or if any of our staff have excelled in their duties, we would like to hear from you. Any comments received will be passed on to those responsible so they will know their efforts were appreciated.

The Council also welcomes suggestions you may have for improving the way services are provided.

## Complaints

The Council strives to provide high quality services to the best of our ability to all our residents and customers. We recognise however that we do not always meet the standards we set ourselves.

This complaints procedure should help you tell us if you think something has gone wrong with any of the services or facilities we provide and look at how we can improve on this.

Your complaints are important as they help us identify where things have not gone as well as we would want them to. We monitor all complaints so that we might learn from what you tell us.

All complaints are dealt with in strict confidence and we will not deal with you any less favourably because you have made a complaint.

## What is a complaint?

The Council has adopted the following definition of a complaint which has been suggested by the Local Government Ombudsman: *'An expression of dissatisfaction with a council's actions or omission, whether justified or not.'*

## What is not a complaint?

A complaint is not:

- A request for service (e.g. request for a repair or removal of flytipping)
- A request for information
- An explanation of Council policy (e.g. the level of Council Tax).

## What is the point of having a formal complaints procedure?

Having a formal process in place enables us to discover whether anything has gone wrong and if so to put it right and learn from it.

## Who can complain?

Any resident, tenant or user of services provided by the Council. Alternatively, you may represent an organisation or be an advocate for a service user affected by the way our services have been provided.

## Complaints about Councillors

This document concentrates on complaints about the service provided by the Council. If you have a complaint about one of your local Councillors, it will be dealt with under a separate procedure.

## How to make a complaint

We would like to think that in the majority of cases complaints could be resolved by speaking to the member of staff who dealt with you in the first place. We would encourage you to do this so might put matters right quickly and with the minimum of fuss.

An example might be a missed bin collection or a recall for a council house repair. Rather than using the formal complaints process, an approach to the appropriate team should be able to resolve the matter without delay.

If such an approach does not resolve your complaint, or if you are unhappy with our response, then you can complaint formally using our two stage complaints procedure.

You can make a complaint by:

- Completing our e-form and submitting this online
- Downloading and completing a paper form and sending this to us at the Civic Centre
- By telephoning us on 01932 838383, or
- By writing or visiting us at the Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone, KT15 2AH.

### Stage 1 complaints

Your complaint will be handled by a senior manager in the appropriate section or business centre. We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days and will provide you with a full response within 10 working days.

Very occasionally, a complaint might be more complex and might require further investigation which may make our 10 day response target difficult to meet. In such cases, we will let you know what is happening and will advise you when we hope to respond.

### Stage 2 complaints

If you are not happy with our response you can make a stage 2 complaint which will be dealt with by a head of service – usually at Corporate Head level. The head of service will review your complaint and the stage 1 response and will respond to you within 10 working days. Once again, if your complaint requires further investigation, we shall advise you of any delays.

The conclusion of stage 2 is the end of the Council's formal complaints procedure.

### What to do if you are still not satisfied

You are free at any time during the complaints procedure to contact your local councillor. Whilst he or she will not deal directly with a complaint about the way the Council provides a service, your councillor can talk to you about your complaint and help you in making contact with officers.

You can get details of who your local councillor is and how to contact him/her from our website, from our Front of House staff at the Civic Centre or from local libraries.

If you remain dissatisfied, having exhausted the formal complaints procedure, you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) if you believe we have not handled matters properly. Full information can be found on the LGO's website at [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk). Alternatively, you can contact the LGO's advice team on 0300 061 0614 or write to them at PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH or fax on 024 7682 0001.

The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) will look at housing related complaints. Complaints to this service have to be submitted by a 'designated person' who can be an MP, a local councillor or a tenant panel. Full details about the process can be found on the HOS website at [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk). Alternatively, you can contact the HOS on 0300 111 3000 or write to them at 81 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN or fax on 020 7831 1942.

In certain cases, the Council reserves the right to consider complaints as vexatious and decline to respond to further approaches. The decision to classify a complaint as vexatious will be taken by a senior officer. Further details of the Council's vexatious complaints procedure can be found on the Council's website.

## Submit a Compliment, comment or complaint

If you have any questions about filling in this form or need it in a different format or language, please tell us. PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS and make sure that you sign and date the form.

### Information about you

Title
First Name
Last Name
Address
Postcode
Contact telephone number
Other telephone number
E-mail address

### Details of your compliment, suggestion or complaint

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### Have you already spoken to a member of staff about this?

Yes/ No
If yes, please give details below:

If you wish to make a complaint, how would you like us to resolve this?

Please sign here

Date

Please return this form to

**Runnymede Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Station Road  
Addlestone  
Surrey  
KT15 2AH**