



CUSTOMER CARE COMPLIMENT, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction and Aims

- 1 Eastleigh Borough Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and access to its services and aims to provide the best service we can.
- 2 This policy and our procedures aim to ensure fair, proportionate resolution at the earliest stage, be easy to use, be understandable and easily followed. They are designed to be used when customers want to let us know when we are doing well, to make a suggestion or comment or raise a formal complaint where they feel there has been some form of persistent service failure which they believe is the Council's fault.
- 3 We aim to provide the best possible service and feedback from customers helps us to learn and improve. We appreciate customer comments, compliments and complaints regarding our services and staff and we will use the information gained to improve the quality of service we provide.
- 4 We recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and if they do, we would like to know so that we can try to put them right. We will deal with all complaints fairly and impartially.
- 5 We aim to provide high quality services at all times. Feedback from our customers is important in helping us maintain and, if needed, improve the standards of services we provide. We welcome customers comments on their experiences, telling us where we have done well or making suggestions about the services they would like to receive.

Compliments and comments

We understand that customers may wish to share their experiences of using our services, give feedback and/or want to tell us when they think we are doing something particularly well. Comments of this nature are welcome.

[Give a Compliment](#)

Definition of a Complaint

- 6 A complaint is: *'an expression of dissatisfaction about a Council service (whether that service is provided directly by the Council or by a contractor or partner) that requires a response.'*

7 You can make a complaint if you're not satisfied with our service or:

- you feel you have not been treated with courtesy or fairness
- you are unhappy about the standard of service you have received
- you feel we have failed to provide a service to which you are entitled
- you are unhappy about the action taken by us.

What this Policy does Cover

- 8 This policy and our procedures will cover formal complaints about any form of service dissatisfaction or maladministration if you consider we have failed:
- to provide information/correct information
 - to follow procedures
 - in our standard of work
 - to provide accurate advice or information, including our website content or accessibility to our website
 - to deliver without necessary or reasonable delays
 - to adhere to our rules and regulations
 - to treat you fairly and promptly
 - in the behaviour of our staff
 - in other matters, such as equality issues causing unfairness, barriers or accessibility to services

Requests for service are not covered under this policy, although it may become a complaint if we fail to meet our service standards after receiving the initial request/enquiry.

Where other more appropriate arrangements apply

Certain types of issues or ways to report things fall outside of our Complaints process because there are more appropriate and quicker procedures in place to deal with them. Some examples of these are listed below:

- Complaints relating to the conduct of Borough, Parish, or Town Councillors – these follow the [Members' Code of Conduct](#)
- Dissatisfaction with politically-determined policy - please contact your local [Councillor](#) to raise your concerns
- If you have received a [penalty-charge-notice \(PCN\)](#)
- Whistleblowing [Anti-Fraud and Corruption](#)
- Request the collection of a missed bin - please wait until the end of the working day to [report a missed bin](#).
- Comments on [planning applications](#)
- To report a noise nuisance [Noise Nuisance](#) issue
- Grass cutting/hedge maintenance/leaf clearance concerns [report an issue](#)
- Setting up a Direct Debit for Council Tax payments [pay-your-council-tax](#)

- Non-payment of Council Tax [non-payment-of-council-tax](#)
- FOI/EIR Requests [FOI/EIR Request](#)
- Data Protection concerns [Data Protection Contact](#)

However, this doesn't preclude a comment, compliment or complaint being made regarding the level of service received using the following links:

[Give a Compliment](#)

[Make a comment](#)

[Make a complaint](#)

Matters that are dealt with by another professional body/organisation

- Any matter being investigated or having been investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman [LGO](#)
- Drain and flooding issues, (Hampshire County Council) [Report flooding or drainage issue](#)
- Reports of traffic lights, congestion and road/potholes and highway maintenance <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance>
- Universal Credit advice [Universal Credit](#)

Exclusions

Some matters are excluded from this policy as they are matters over which another judicial body will decide. Examples of exclusions are:

- Matters which are subject to litigation and/or have already been before a court/tribunal;
- Where a court has made, is making or about to make a determination on the specifics of a complaint or matters that are subject to litigation and/or have already been before a court/tribunal;
- Matters for which statutory appeal bodies or tribunals have been established - e.g., parking fines
- Complaints where investigation(s) into the subject matter have taken place and have been concluded
- Cases where the Council has taken a decision in a proper manner, or for an explanation of a decision.

Anonymous Complaints

- 9 It may be more difficult for us to investigate anonymous complaints and responses will not be able to be sent without the contact details of the person making the complaint. However, complaints relating to vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and people with learning disabilities or mental ill health will be considered and investigated if there are safeguarding issues.

Who can complain?

- Residents
- Anyone visiting or working in the Borough
- Anyone acting on behalf of an individual or group of individuals, provided they have written consent to do so, including MPs, Councillors, Advice Agencies and other advocacy groups

Making a Complaint

10 Our procedure has two Stages.

- **Stage One** – Stage One will be investigated by the Service Manager or staff member from the area responsible for the service that was provided, and they will respond directly to the person who raised the complaint.
- **Stage Two** – We will endeavour to resolve your complaint at Stage One, however if you remain dissatisfied with the response received or the resolution proposed you may request that your complaint is escalated to Stage Two. Complaints escalated to this stage will be reviewed by an independent Senior Manager.

11 All complaints will be investigated robustly and we will consider our findings properly.

12 You may contact the [Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman](#), (LGO) if you are not satisfied with our explanation or suggested resolution. The Ombudsman will usually expect you to have taken your complaint through both stages of our procedure before you contact them, however, in accordance with the LGO guidance, for complaints that do not fall under a statutory process, we may inform you at Stage One of this procedure if we feel we have reached our final decision, in which case we will direct you to the LGO in our response to you.

Timescales

13 A complaint made under this policy must be raised within **six months** of the issue or incident for which you feel dissatisfied having occurred. Complaints received that are older than six months will need to be accompanied with an explanation regarding why it was not possible for the complaint to be raised within this timescale and any decision to investigate this or not, will be at our discretion.

- We will aim to acknowledge a complaint **within three working days** of receiving it.

- We will aim to respond to complaints **within 15 working days** after acknowledgement; a total of **18 working days from the date received**.

14 Some issues may take longer to investigate. If this is the case, we will keep you informed of any delays that may occur and may require an extension of timescale.

15 Some complaints may require another procedure to be started or be part of a process that has already started, and it may not be possible to provide a full response until that process has been concluded. If this is the case, we will advise you of this and keep you informed where possible, of the outcome.

How to Make a Complaint

16 You can make a comment, compliment or complaint:

- On-line via your [MyEastleigh](#) account
- By Email (customerservicecentre@eastleigh.gov.uk)
- By letter
- By telephone
- In person

[Our Contact Details](#)

17 If you wish to have a representative acting on your behalf, we will need confirmation from you that you are happy for us to contact and liaise with them directly to ensure we are acting in your best interests.

Completed Complaints

18 Where the complaint has gone through the Council's corporate complaints procedure and is closed, we will not enter into further correspondence about the complaint, and any further correspondence on the same subject will be read and placed on file but will receive no acknowledgement or response.

Equalities

19 We are committed to positively promoting equality of opportunity and have due regard to our duties under the Equality Act 2010. We seek to do this via our Equalities Policy and Action Plan.

Putting Things Right

20 We will endeavour to deal with any concerns fairly, fully and in a timely manner. We will acknowledge our mistakes and apologise for them where we are at fault, and we will explain why things went wrong and what we will do to prevent the same problem recurring in future.

21 Examples of ways in which we can resolve a problem are:

- Apologise
- Take the action that should have been taken before you had cause to complain
- Reconsider a decision that was not taken properly (excluding matters being considered under a process other than this one)
- Improve our procedures to prevent recurrence
- Repay money owed if applicable

22 In a small number of cases customers sometimes pursue their cases in a way that can impede the investigation of their complaint and their behaviour can become unacceptable, for example, abusive, offensive or threatening. This behaviour inhibits our staffs' ability to do their work and provide services to others. In these cases, we may decide to take action to restrict the contact that person has with the Council.

Any such action will be taken in compliance with the Council's [Persistent Complainants and Unreasonable Complainants Behaviour Policy](#)

Equalities

23 We are committed to positively promoting equality of opportunity and have due regard to our duties under the Equality Act 2010. We seek to do this via our Equalities Policy and Action Plan.

Retention of Documents

24 We keep all information confidential, particularly names and addresses that can identify a complainant, site or complaint. However, we may be obliged to disclose some information under certain statutory provisions. Please view our [Privacy Policy](#) and our [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#) for more information.