



Proud of our past. Energised for our future.

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

A CUSTOMER GUIDE TO COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

October 2012 (V6 amended Oct 2016 M Joyce)

INTRODUCTION

This policy and procedure applies to all Council employees and to employees and organisations who deliver services on behalf of the local authority. It reflects the Councils commitment to ensure all departments deliver a consistent approach in responding to and learning from our customers in order to deliver excellent customer services.

COMMENTS

How will we deal with a comment?

- We will record details of the comment and acknowledge receipt within 10 working days.

How will we respond to a comment?

- We will either explain how we will implement your suggestion or explain why we are unable to.
- We will thank you for helping us to improve Council services

COMPLIMENTS

How will we deal with a compliment?

- We will log details locally within departments and acknowledge receipt of your compliment within 10 working days.

How will we respond to a compliment?

- We will thank you for taking the time to let us know that we are providing a good service.

COMPLAINTS

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by the Council or its staff affecting an individual customer or group of customers.

How to complain

Complaints can be made in person, by fax, telephone, letter, e-mail or via the Councils website.

Examples of complaints

A delay in taking action without good reason
A failure to provide a service
Mistakes in the way a decision has been taken
Not following the law or the Council's own policies
Giving incorrect or misleading information
Bias or unfair discrimination
Rude, unhelpful or inappropriate behaviour by staff
Poor/ lack of communication
Failing to meet published or advertised service standards
Failing to meet our statutory obligations

The procedure **does not** cover the following:-

Initial requests for a service.

Initial requests for information or explanation of Council policy or practice.

Anonymous complaints, although we will record them for monitoring purposes.

Matters in which the complainant has a statutory right of appeal, or other statutory redress.

Complaints by Council employees or former employees about employment matters as separate grievance procedures exist for these purposes.

Complaints about the conduct of Councillors for the reasons explained on page 4.

Complaints by Councillors in their capacity as Councillors rather than service users.

Allegations of financial impropriety or of criminal wrongdoing, which, if made, will always be referred to the Council's internal audit section, or the police, as appropriate.

Repeated complaints where the original complaint had been investigated, considered and responded to appropriately at each stage of the procedure, and no new element to the complaint has been introduced.

How will we respond to a complaint?

The Council has a 3 Stage procedure that is designed to support the effective management and resolution of complaints.

Stage 1 - All complaints received will be reviewed by the Customer Relations Officer who will try and resolve the matter to your satisfaction within 10 working days. Alternatively he/she may decide it is appropriate to progress the complaint straight to Stage 2 or Stage 3.

Stage2 - If it is not possible for the Customer Relations Officer to resolve the complaint, he/she may forward the complaint to the Department to investigate and you will receive a response from the Service Manager/Director within 15 working days.

Stage 3 - However, if you remain dissatisfied and make further representation to the Council, the complaint may be forwarded to the Councils Managing Director for a final investigation and response within 10 working days.

Timescales - If an Officer is unable to conduct their investigation within the time scales allowed, they will contact you with an interim response, telling you when a final response will be given and explaining the reason for the delay.

Local Government Ombudsman.

If you are not satisfied with the final response from the Managing Director you will be given information about your right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Local Government Ombudsman,
PO Box 4771,
Coventry,
CV4 0EH
Email www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint
Tel 0300 061 0614
Fax 024 7682 0001

Complaints about a Director

Complaints about a Director should be addressed to the Managing Director.

Complaints about the Managing Director

Complaints about the Managing Director should be addressed to the Mayor.

Complaints about the Mayor

Complaints about the Mayor should be addressed to the Managing Director.

Complaints about Councillors

The conduct of Councillors is regulated by the Localism Act 2012. Complaints should be directed in writing, by letter, fax or e-mail, to:

The Monitoring Officer,
Copeland Borough Council,
The Copeland Centre, Catherine Street,
Whitehaven, Cumbria.
CA28 7SJ
e-mail Clinton.boyce@copeland.gov.uk
Fax 01946 598516

Helping the Council to Improve its Services

Although our primary objective is to provide an effective means for customers to make comments compliments and complaints and have them resolved, another very important objective is to improve services and service delivery. Therefore it is important that the outcomes of any investigation in which mistakes or problems are identified are reported to the relevant department so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid a recurrence. Equally, reports of good service and practices should also be shared.

What kinds of remedies are available if a complaint is upheld?

If your complaint is found to be justified, the Council will, as far as possible, take remedial action to put you in the position you would have been in if things had not gone wrong. An apology will always be made. In some cases it may be possible to provide you with the service you are entitled to receive, but have not received and which resulted in your complaint. In others, a change in procedures to prevent future difficulties for yourself, or for customers in general, may be the solution.