



Complaint Policy

Version 2 - August 2017

Owner: Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
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Complaint Policy

Version control table

Version Number	Date	Purpose/Change	Reviewer / Authoriser
1.0	15/05/2015	Original Policy	Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
1.0	24/08/2017	Revised Policy	Corporate Management Team

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1 About this document

This documents sets out Brent Council's position on complaints.

2 Policy Statement

We recognise the importance of customer complaints and welcome them as a valuable form of feedback about our services. We will use the information gained from complaints to help improve the quality of our services.

- When we have done something wrong and it has had an adverse impact on a customer, we shall endeavour to put things right.
- We will acknowledge all complaints and respond to all complaints within relevant timescales.
- If customers are dissatisfied about how we have handled their complaint, we will shall advise customers of their rights to appeal to the relevant body.
- We will ensure that there is a complaint provision for any services provided by a partner agency.
- We will process all personal information relating to complaints in line with the Data Protection Act. From the 25th May 2018 this will be replaced by the General Data Protection Regulations.

3 Scope

Anyone who uses and/or is individually affected by our services can make a complaint.

Concerns raised by partner organisations about our services are outside the scope of this policy.

Expressions of dissatisfaction against democratic Council decisions are not covered by this complaints policy, nor are matters that are subject to a statutory right of appeal (see addendum 2 for a list of these).

4 Responsibilities

The Chief Executive, or their nominated deputy, will respond to all final stage complaints, except where otherwise directed by statute.

Strategic Directors shall have overall responsibility for complaints performance for their directorates.

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Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that remedies and service improvements identified by complaints are carried out.

All staff are responsible for supporting timely and good quality complaint responses within the council's timeframes.

Addendum 1 – Timescales

Corporate Complaints

- 20 working days for stage 1
- 30 working days for stage 2

Children Statutory Complaints

- 10-20 working days stage 1
- 25-65 working days stage 2
- 30 working days for stage 3 panel

Adults Social Care

- 20 working days – 6 months

Freedom of Information Internal Reviews

- 20-40 working days

Addendum 2 – Special Cases

Some types of complaints and appeals fall outside of our corporate complaints procedure.

The following complaints are not covered by the corporate procedure.

- Complaints relating to Children's and Adult Social Care (these have their own statutory procedure)
- Complaints against schools
- Complaints against councillors
- Anonymous complaints
- Complaints made on behalf of individuals without their explicit consent
- Complaints where the customer or the council has started legal proceedings or court action (but not where a customer has only threatened to do so).

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The following matters have their own appeals procedure and are not covered by this policy, these include:

- Penalty Charge Notices
- Fixed Penalty Notices
- Planning appeals
- Appeals against statutory notices
- Appeals relating to schools and school admissions
- Appeals against Special Education Needs assessments
- Housing and council tax benefit appeals
- Council tax and valuation discount and exemption appeals
- Appeals against the refusal of disabled badges for parking exemption
- Appeals against decisions relating to homelessness

Addendum 3 – Definition of a complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction, not resolved immediately to the customer's satisfaction, about the level, quality or nature of a service which the customer feels should have been provided. This includes services provided by people or organisations acting on the council's behalf.

Typically a complaint could be about:

- Delay in taking action without good reason
- Failure to provide a service
- Mistakes in the way a decision was taken
- Not following the law or the Council's own rules
- Broken promises
- Giving incorrect or misleading information
- Bias or discrimination
- Rude, unhelpful or inappropriate behaviour by staff
- Poor communication