

The Complaints Procedure

Make your complaint in writing, by telephone, by email or in person to the relevant Head of Service. Let us know:

What your complaint is; when it happened; why and how you think we should have done things differently; what you think the Council should do to put things right.



Stage One

Your complaint will be investigated by the Head of Service. It is the Council's aim to resolve all complaints at stage one. If however you are not satisfied with the response you can ask for your complaint to proceed to stage two.

An acknowledgement will be sent informing you of the Procedure and that the Council aims to send a full reply to you within 10 working days of receipt of your complaint.



Stage Two

Your complaint will be fully investigated by a member of the Corporate Management Team and an appropriate councillor.

If your complaint is found to be justified, the Council will take appropriate action to remedy the situation as quickly as it can



If you are still not satisfied you can ask the Local Government Ombudsman to carry out an independent examination of your complaint.

**Local Government Ombudsman,
Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP.
Tel: 020 7217 4620. www.lgo.org.uk**

EQUALITIES

Wealden District Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination. Every possible step will be taken to ensure that you are treated fairly and impartially.

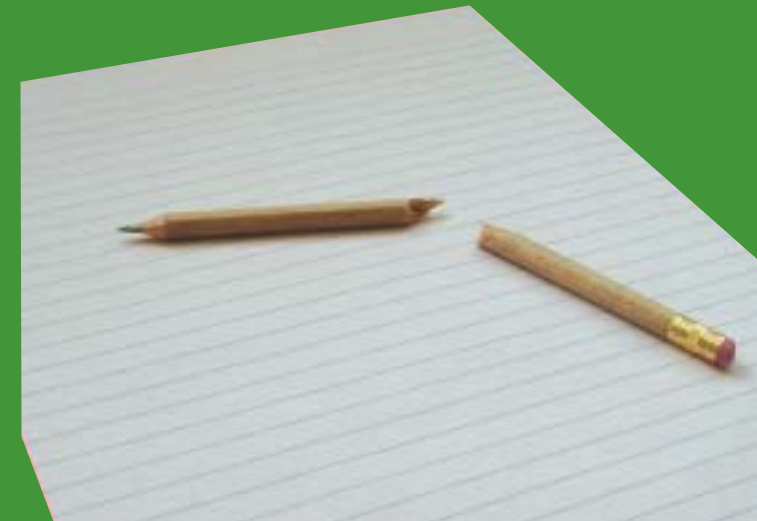
If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in this document in large print, Braille, tape/CD or in another language please contact Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or info@wealden.gov.uk

For further information contact the Complaints Helpdesk on 01323 443530 or email: info@wealden.gov.uk

Council Offices, Vicarage Lane,
Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 2AX
Tel: 01323 443322
Fax: 01323 443333
www.wealden.gov.uk

I Want to Make a Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service, we would like to know in order to put things right.



Why do we need a complaints procedure?

Wealden District Council aims to provide good-quality services on every occasion but sometimes things can go wrong. The purpose of the Complaints Procedure is to find out whether the Council did something wrong and, if it did, to try and put things right for the future.

If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service, the actions or lack of action by the Council, its employees or anyone providing services on behalf of the Council, we would like you to let us know so that we can try to put things right. The Complaints Procedure helps us to do this. Your complaint will be:

- Recorded in the register of complaints
- Dealt with as quickly as possible;
- Handled courteously and fairly; and
- Investigated fully.

The Complaints Procedure is intended to deal with specific situations such as mistakes, delay or inefficiency.

Some things which can be dealt with more effectively in other ways are not treated as a complaint.

Examples of those are listed opposite so please think carefully about whether your situation falls into one of those categories before seeking to use the Complaints Procedure explained later in this leaflet.

Things which we do not treat as a complaint

A complaint against the Council needs to say what the Council itself has done wrong.

- In general, complaints about bin collection, litter, neighbours, noise, food establishments etc will be treated as requests to do something about them, i.e. requests for service.
- Disagreement with a planning permission, enforcement decision or other regulatory activity. (As the law currently stands, a planning decision is binding and there is no right of appeal, except by the recipient to the Planning Inspectorate.)
- Where there is some other legal remedy or statutory right of appeal, for example in respect of certain planning, housing and taxation matters.
- Disagreement with a policy or decision lawfully made by the Council. These will be monitored by the Directorate concerned and, in appropriate cases, reported to the relevant councillor(s).
- Complaints which allege financial impropriety or criminal activity. These will be dealt with by the Chief Executive or a Corporate Director providing evidence to substantiate the allegation is supplied with the complaint.

Complaints that a Councillor has breached the Code of Conduct for Members should be referred to:

The Standards Board for England, 1st Floor,
Cottons Centre, Cottons Lane, London SE1 2QG
www.standardsboard.co.uk
Tel: 0800 107 2001.

How do you make your complaint?

You can make your complaint by telephone, in writing, e-mail or in person. It will help us to deal with your complaint if you explain briefly and accurately.

- What you are complaining about;
- When it happened (or should have happened);
- Why and how you think we should have done things differently; and
- What you think the Council should do to put things right.

We will respond to your complaint as quickly as possible and aim to reply fully within ten working days. If your complaint cannot be resolved to your satisfaction by the head of the service concerned, you can ask for one of the Council's Management Team to review how your complaint was dealt with, with an appropriate councillor (what we call the second stage of the Procedure).

Putting things right

If your complaint is found to be justified the Council will take appropriate action to remedy the situation.

What happens if you are still not satisfied?

If the Council is not able to resolve the complaint to your satisfaction, you can ask the Local Government Ombudsman to carry out an independent examination.