

Complaints Procedure

Warwick District Council is keen to investigate complaints made against it. A Complaints procedure, has therefore, been designed to ensure that if a complaint is made, an auditable system exists to deal with it correctly.

What sort of complaint does this procedure cover?

The procedure covers general complaints, complaints alleging discrimination and complaints relating to Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.

It does not cover:

- A request for service;
- A request for information or explanation of Council policy or practices;
- Matters where there is a right of appeal, either with the Council or to an independent tribunal or to the courts; or
- Complaints about Members of the Council (Councillors). These are dealt with by the Chief Executive.

A complaint is usually an expression of dissatisfaction about a service provided by the Council and it may take the form of claiming one of the three following things:

1. That the actual service delivered by the Council was unsatisfactory;
2. That the person or persons responsible for delivering the service did not act in a proper manner; or
3. That a policy of the Council is incorrect.

Complaints about discrimination may take the form of claiming one of the following:

- Race
- Colour
- Ethnic/National Origin
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Political Affiliation
- Responsibility for Dependents
- Gender
- Nationality
- Religion/Belief
- Age
- Marital Status
- Sexual Orientation

Discrimination can take place in two forms:

Direct -

Treating a person less favorably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances.

Indirect -

Applying a requirement or condition which, although applied equally to all persons, is such that only certain groups of people can easily comply with it.

How does the procedure work?

There are three stages:

Stage One: When a complaint is received, a written acknowledgement will be sent within three working days. The acknowledgement will set out the details of the complaint so the complainant can check that they are correct.

Stage Two: An investigation into the complaint will then be carried out by the Business Unit or Units concerned. A written answer will be sent to the complainant within 20 working days stating that:

- The investigation is completed giving details of any proposed action; or

- The investigation has not been completed giving the reason why and a date when a full reply can be expected.

In addition, details of how to implement stage three will be provided should the complainant not be satisfied with the answers given.

Stage Three: The complaint is referred to the Chief Executive who will appoint a person from the outside of the Unit(s) concerned to investigate. A written answer will be sent to the complainant within 20 working days stating again that:

- The investigation is complete, giving details of any proposed action; or
- The investigation has not been completed giving the reason why and a date when a full reply can be expected.

In addition, details of how to access the Local Government Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner or the Disability Rights Commissioner, will be provided should the complainant not be satisfied with the answer given.

Remedies

If a complaint is found to be justified, the Council will seek to provide a remedy that aims to leave you no worse off than you were before.

If the remedy offered is not satisfactory, you have the right to go to the Local Government Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner, or the Disability Rights Commissioner.