

Calderdale Council Corporate Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

Calderdale Council welcomes all feedback, including compliments, suggestions, and complaints. Your feedback helps us continually improve our services.

We are committed to treating all customers fairly, respectfully, and equitably, ensuring equal access to our services. To make sure our Complaints Procedure is accessible to everyone, we actively monitor its use across the diverse community we serve.

2. How to Make a Complaint

Resolving Issues Quickly

If you have a concern, we encourage you to [contact](#) the relevant service directly to give them an opportunity to resolve the issue.

Complaints Requiring Investigation

If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can escalate it to be reviewed by an Investigating Officer. You can submit your complaint in the following ways:

- Online: Submit a complaint at <http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/council/consultation-and-feedback/compliments-and-complaints>
- Email: Contact us via <https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/contact/complaints>
- Telephone: Contact Customer First on 01422 288001 or the relevant service directly.
- In Writing: Address your complaint to the relevant service, Halifax Town Hall, Halifax HX1 1UJ.
- In person: you can visit any public Council Office to submit a complaint.

You may submit the complaint yourself or have someone do it on your behalf, such as a friend, relative, neighbour, or local Councillor.

If you need assistance, our staff at Customer First or the Complaints Team will be happy to help. Making a complaint will not affect the services you receive.

3. What Complaints We Handle

We handle complaints about most Council services, including but not limited to:

- Failure to provide a service or meet a reasonable standard.
- Unhelpful or inappropriate behaviour by Council staff.
- Failure to follow Council policies or procedures.
- Failure to consider relevant information in decision-making.
- Delayed or incomplete communication of your rights.
- Providing incorrect or insufficient information.

4. What Complaints We Do Not Handle

We cannot process complaints under this policy if they relate to:

- Schools or Children's Social Care: Refer to Section 7.
- Elected Members or commissioned services: Refer to Section 7.
- Matters with appeal rights, such as independent tribunals or legal remedies.
- Service requests, like reporting a faulty streetlight.
- Information requests under the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, or other legislation.
- Public liability claims: These are handled separately.
- Complaints that:
 - Have been withdrawn by you (unless significant learning points arise).
 - Repeat or closely duplicate previous complaints.
 - Are being, or have already been, investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman.
 - Relate to events over a year old, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
 - Have been deemed vexatious or unreasonably persistent.
 - Would prejudice ongoing legal proceedings or investigations.

If your complaint cannot be handled under this policy, we will explain why in writing.

5. How We Handle Complaints

Stage 1: Initial Investigation

1. **Acknowledgment:** You will receive an acknowledgment within 5 working days via email or post.
2. **Investigation:** An Investigating Officer will review:
 - Why you are unhappy.
 - What went wrong.
 - How we can resolve the issue.
3. **Response:** You will receive a written response within 10 working days. If a full response cannot be provided in this timeframe, we will agree on a revised timescale with you.

Stage 2: Escalation

If you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response, you can escalate your complaint for a further review by a different Investigating Officer.

1. **Acknowledgment:** Your escalation will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
2. **Clarification:** We will confirm the unresolved issues and outcomes you seek.
3. **Investigation:** The Investigating Officer will conduct a detailed review.
4. **Response:** You will receive a response within 20 working days. If more time is required, we will agree on a revised timescale with you.

We generally expect individuals to ask to escalate complaints to Stage 2 of the complaint process within 20 working days of receiving our Stage 1 response. However, we understand that this is not always possible and that individuals may want to give us an opportunity to resolve matters before escalating their complaint

further. Therefore, we will generally accept requests to escalate complaints to Stage 2 which are made within six months of receiving our Stage 1 response.

It is important that you escalate your complaint as soon as possible if you remain unhappy with our response. It can be challenging for us to properly consider complaints as more time passes between the issue you are complaining about and our consideration of your complaint. This is because it may be difficult to obtain relevant evidence and people involved may not be able to accurately recollect what happened.

Stage 2 represents the Council's final decision.

6. Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

If you remain dissatisfied, you can escalate your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The LGO is independent of the Council and investigates complaints impartially.

- Website: <https://www.lgo.org.uk>
- Phone: 0300 061 0614

The LGO will investigate whether the Council has acted improperly and, if so, recommend corrective actions.

7. Special Cases

Children's Social Care

Complaints are handled under a [statutory procedure](#).

Adults Social Care Services.

Complaints are handled under a [statutory procedure](#).

Schools

Raise complaints with the school's headteacher. If unresolved, contact the school's governing body.

Councillors

Complaints about Councillors breaching the Code of Conduct should be directed to:

- Email: ian.hughes@calderdale.gov.uk

Concerns about Member decisions or policies should be addressed directly to the Councillors involved.

Commissioned or Partnered Services

For complaints about externally delivered services:

1. Contact the service provider directly.
2. If unresolved, escalate to the relevant Council department responsible for commissioning the service.