

TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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Issued by
Legal Services, Westleigh House, Carnarvon Road
Clacton on Sea, Essex, CO15 6QF

TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

GUIDE TO THE COUNCIL'S COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Tendring District Council seeks to provide quality, cost-effective services to the people of Tendring and welcomes feedback and suggestions from service-users. We are constantly working to improve the services we provide and, if you believe you have not received the level of service you would expect, we ask you to tell us about it. Your complaints provide us with information not only about where things may be going wrong, but also about what you think of us. They serve as an excellent way for us to monitor and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all our services.

The purpose of this booklet is to tell you:

1. How to complain to the Council;
2. How we will deal with your complaint; and
3. What to do if you remain dissatisfied.

This booklet is available on request in large print or audio versions and in different languages.

1. HOW TO COMPLAIN

How do I make a complaint?

If you feel the Council has done something wrong or badly, or failed to do something, the first thing you should do is contact the officer you have been dealing with. You should ask them to put things right for you or explain why the Council has acted in this way. If you remain dissatisfied, you may wish to make a formal complaint using the form in the centre of this booklet.

To help us deal effectively with your complaint you will need to tell us:

- What the problem is and how it has occurred

- How it has affected you
- What you consider we should now do to put the matter right

We can assist you if you have a disability that prevents you from making your complaint in writing and we can also help if English is not your first language. If you would like any support in completing the complaints form contained within this booklet, please let us know as soon as possible.

What can I complain about?

A complaint must be about something specific, for example:

- the standard of service provided by the Council
- failure by the Council to provide an agreed service
- failure by the Council to respond to a request for a service
- that the Council has exceeded its powers
- that the attitude or conduct of an officer has been unacceptable
- the Council has not followed an agreed procedure
- maladministration by the Council (ie delay, bias or confusion)

What can I not complain about?

This procedure does not cover:

- requests for a service
- requests for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice
- matters for which there is an existing right of appeal (either within the Council itself or to an independent tribunal) or legal remedy
- complaints made more than 6 months after the events complained about.

Complaints brought outside the time limits set out in this procedure will not be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why the complaint could not have brought

within these times. Whether there are exceptional circumstances will be determined by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Complaints about Councillors must be brought under the separate "Complaints about Councillors" procedure available from the Council's website www.tendringdc.gov.uk or the reception area of any Council offices.

If you are not sure which procedure deals with your particular complaint, please contact the Council's Monitoring Officer or complete the Complaints Form in the centre of this booklet and send it to the Council's Monitoring Officer, who will look into the matter and let you know the best way forward.

The Monitoring Officer
Westleigh House
Carnarvon Road
CLACTON-ON-SEA
Essex CO15 6QF
e-mail: michaelgibson-davies@tendringdc.gov.uk

2. HOW WILL YOU DEAL WITH MY COMPLAINT?

Complaints differ widely in nature and complexity and in dealing with any complaints made in accordance with the Complaints Procedure we will seek to apply three basic principles:

1. To investigate a complaint as quickly and impartially as possible. This will initially be done by the service concerned.
2. To provide you with a full response that outlines the findings of the investigation and, wherever possible, resolves the matter to your satisfaction
3. To keep the steps of the Complaints Procedure, as set out below, separate from each other

What are the steps of the Complaints Procedure?

You should first contact the officer you have been dealing with and explain the issue to them. The officer you talk to may be able to help you there and then, or at least indicate if the matter can be resolved.

Step 1 Formal Complaint

If you are not satisfied, you should speak or write to the officer's line manager as soon as possible. They will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days of receipt and will provide you with a full response within 10 working days of receipt. Where appropriate, the Council may ask another line manager to investigate a particular complaint.

Step 2 Formal Written Complaint - Investigation by Head of Service

If you are not satisfied with the response you have received, you should complete **ALL** the questions on the Complaints Form and send this to the relevant Head of Service within 28 days of the date of the full response provided under Step 1. They will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days of receipt and will provide you with a full response within 10 working days of receipt. If the Head of Service needs longer to complete their investigation, they will inform you of this in writing and provide you with reasons. Where appropriate, the Council may ask another Head of Service to investigate a particular complaint.

Step 3 Review by the Chief Executive

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Step 2, you can write to the Chief Executive and ask him to review your complaint. You should do this within 28 days of the date of the response provided by the Head of Service under Step 2. The Chief Executive will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days of receipt and will provide you with a full response within 10 working days of

receipt. The Chief Executive may ask another officer to undertake the review on his behalf and, if your complaint relates to the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer will review the complaint.

3. WHAT IF I AM STILL NOT SATISFIED?

At any time you have the right to refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. This is an independent person who looks into complaints of maladministration (bad practice) against local authorities. The Ombudsman will usually want to know if your complaint can be resolved locally, so you should follow the steps in the Complaints Procedure first. The Ombudsman who deals with Tendring District Council can be contacted at

Millbank Tower,
Millbank,
London SW1P 4QP
Tel 020 7217 4620
Website www.lgo.org.uk

A booklet explaining how to refer matters to the Ombudsman is available from Council offices.

COMPLAINTS FORM

Name:

Address:

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Post Code:Email Address

Telephone (day):Telephone (eve):

What do you consider the Council has done wrong or failed to do?

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How has the problem affected you?

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What should the Council do to put things right?

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Who have you spoken to about this and when? Please quote any reference numbers

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Signed: Dated :
(To be signed by the person making the complaint)

Please send the completed form to the relevant Head of Department

<u>Service</u>	<u>Head of Service</u>	<u>Address and Telephone</u>
Customer Services	Jill Coleshaw	88/90 Pier Avenue, Clacton on Sea, Essex, CO15 1TN Tel: 01255 686201 jcoleshaw@tendringdc.gov.uk
Resource Management	Karen Neath	Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton on Sea, Essex CO15 1SE Tel: 01255 686520 kneath@tendringdc.gov.uk
Life Opportunities	Paul Price	Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton on Sea, Essex CO15 1SE Tel: 01255 686430 pprice@tendringdc.gov.uk
Public Experience	Jon Barber	Council Offices, Thorpe Road, Weeley, Essex CO16 9AJ Tel: 01255 686741 jbarber@tendringdc.gov.uk
Planning	Sarah Stevens	Council Offices, Thorpe Road, Weeley, Essex CO16 9AJ Tel: 01255 686101 sstevens@tendringdc.gov.uk
Regeneration	Martyn Knappett	Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton on Sea, Essex CO15 1SE Tel: 01255 686501 mknappett@tendringdc.gov.uk