

## Complaints Policy

One of the ways we continue to improve our service is by listening to and responding to the views of our users. If anyone is particularly happy or unhappy with any part of our service, we would like you to tell us.



### How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint about any aspect of the service, although you cannot use this service to say that you were unhappy with the information you were provided with if it was factually correct i.e. you would like to appeal to the SENDIST but there is no right of appeal available to you.

In the first instance, we would always try to resolve any concerns informally. In the first instance, this would be done through the SEND IASS manager –contact can be by phone (02476 694307), email [iass@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:iass@coventry.gov.uk) or in writing to:

SEND IASS manager  
Limbrick Wood Centre,  
Thomas Naul Croft,  
Tile Hill,  
Coventry,  
CV4 9QX

We can only address complaints in relation to the SEND IASS service itself.

If you remain unhappy, then you can formalise a complaint through Coventry City Council.

Telephone: 0800 269851

Email: [speakup@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:speakup@coventry.gov.uk)

You can access an on-line form at

[https://myaccount.coventry.gov.uk/en/service/Speak Up comments compliments and complaints](https://myaccount.coventry.gov.uk/en/service/Speak_Up_comments_compliments_and_complaints)

## **What we will do with your complaint:**

Complaints are dealt with in line with Coventry City Council's complaints policy. [The whole policy is available to read here.](#)

There are two stages to the formal Complaints Procedure as defined below:

Stage 1 – Service Investigation

Stage 2 – Service Investigation Review

### **Stage 1 – Service Investigation**

If it has not been possible to resolve the complaint informally, it will be raised as a Stage 1 complaint and forwarded to the SEND IASS service for investigation and feedback to the complainant.

The Council will take all reasonable steps to resolve the complaint at Stage 1, and will respond within 10 working days. Where this is not possible, the complainant will be sent an update with an estimate of the likely timescale for a response.

Complainants will be notified in writing of the outcome of the Council's consideration of the complaint whether the complaint has been upheld or not, the reasons and the complainant's right to a service investigation review (Stage 2).

### **Stage 2 - Service Investigation Review**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation at Stage 1, and they consider that one or more of the following apply, they can ask for the complaint to be reviewed at Stage 2.:

- relevant information was not taken into account in investigating the complaint;
- procedures have not been properly applied in handling the complaint;
- there has been an incorrect interpretation of Council policy,

The Stage 2 review will either be conducted by a senior manager or, a senior officer or manager outside the line management of the service depending on the circumstances. The complainant will be expected to explain, in writing or verbally, the grounds for seeking a Stage 2 review.

The Council will normally respond to the complainant within 20 working days from receipt of the request for a Stage 2 review. Where this is not possible, they will be sent an update with an estimate of the likely timescale for a response.

Complainants will be notified in writing of the outcome of the Council's review of the service investigation, whether the complaint has been upheld or not, the reasons why, and the complainant's right to take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, who might decide to carry out an independent investigation of the complaint.

Ordinarily complainants will have 20 working days from the date of the Council's response to make a request for their complaint to progress to the next stage of the complaints procedure. The complainant will be advised if different statutory timescales apply.

### Local Government Ombudsman

If a complainant is unhappy about the way that the Council has dealt with their complaint they can contact the Local Government Ombudsman, who is independent and can investigate complaints about most Council matters. The Ombudsman would normally expect a complaint to be made within 12 months of when the complainant first knew of the problem that they are complaining about. Contact details are as follows:

- Call 0300 061 0614
- Local Government Ombudsman PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 0EH

The Local Government Ombudsman normally requires all complainants to go through all stages of their Council's own Complaints Procedure before considering the complaint. However, in certain circumstances the Ombudsman has the discretion to waive this requirement. This might be because delay could cause harm to the complainant. The complainant should be advised of the normal requirement to complete the Council's Complaints Procedure but also that they can contact the LGO Advice Team for further advice.

Full details of how the Local Government Ombudsman deals with complaints can be found on the Ombudsman website [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

## Complaints service standards

Service standards have been developed to ensure complainants receive the same standard of service regardless of the service area about which they make a complaint.

The standards are:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days - the acknowledgement will inform the complainant who is dealing with their complaint and who they should contact if they want more information.
- Send a full reply within 10 working days - if the complaint is complex or translation/interpretation is required or, for other reasons, a full reply cannot be sent within the 10 working days, an interim reply will be sent reporting on progress and providing the date for a final reply.
- The deadline for response at Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure is 20 working days.

It is important that complaint monitoring is effective. Consequently, a comprehensive monitoring system has been established to ensure that complaints information is recorded consistently across the different Council Directorates and services.

In addition complaints monitoring and reporting are incorporated within the performance management framework so that managers and councillors can learn from complaints and services can be improved.

Key information relating to complaints, including the numbers received, performance against the acknowledgement and response standards and service improvements made as a result of complaints will be reported at Directorate and Corporate level.