

Corporate Complaints via Email/Web Form

Summary of Process in line with published Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy February 2016 (Version 8)

1) Customer raises complaint

Online complaint form –

Customer contacts the Council to raise a complaint via an online complaints web form accessible from the home page of NBC website (recommendation from Customer Service Excellence).

OR

Via customer services –

Customer contacts Customer Services via phone or email to raise a complaint. Customer Service staff establish whether contact is actually a service request (noisy neighbour, dog fouling on pavement) or a complaint about a service provided by the Council which has fallen outside the published standards. If the complaint is about the Council and within the remit of the Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy (CCC Policy) it is recorded on the Council's Customer Relationship Management software, Lagan, and sent to the Customer Relations queue within Lagan to be dealt with by the Customer Relations Team.

- 2) All contact received by the Customer Relations Team (via all methods) is examined to establish whether the communication falls within the remit of the CCC Policy. If it does not fall within the remit of the policy it is redirected to the correct team or organisation and the customer advised. If the complaint received is the first time that the issue has been raised it is passed to the service area to try to resolve informally in accordance with the CCC Policy. If it does fall within the remit of the CCC Policy and the service area has already tried to resolve it, or if it is of a serious nature, it is logged in CDC Respond which is the software used by the Council to record complaints, comments and compliments.
- 3) If a complainant has not provided adequate information to proceed, an email is sent requested the missing information. Once all information is received the complaint is logged on CDC Respond.
- 4) All formal complaints are acknowledged by email if received electronically (unless otherwise agreed) within 3 working days of being logged at Stage 1.
- 5) All details are sent to the appropriate officer in the service area to investigate the complaint. A response is sent to the complainant via email (unless otherwise agreed) within 20 working days of the complaint being logged, and the Customer Relations Team is copied in so that the response can be saved and the case closed. If a complaint cannot be responded to within 20 working days the service sends a holding email to the customer to advise.
- 6) If the customer remains dissatisfied they can request that their complaint is escalated to Stage 2 providing they advise the Customer Relations Team within 10 working days of their response being received. The customer must provide additional evidence to substantiate their complaint.

- 7) The Stage 2 complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days of it being accepted and logged.
- 8) The Customer Relations Officer will gather all relevant information; this may include requesting information from other officers and asking ICT to scrutinise electronic systems. An investigation will be carried out and a draft response will be sent to the relevant officers in the service area that is the subject of the complaint, to check the factual content of the response.
- 9) The Customer Relations Officer will respond to the Stage 2 complaint within 20 working days of it being logged advising that if the customer still remains dissatisfied they can seek advice from the Local Government Ombudsman who may investigate their complaint independently.

Formal Complaints Received in 2016/2017

Service Area	Total number of stage 1 complaints received by all methods of access	Stage 1 complaints received by email/web form only	Stage 2 complaints received
Partnerships	1	1	0
Chief Executive Department	1	1	1
Elections	3	2	0
Taxi Licensing	5	2	0
Mayor/Civic Services	1	1	0
Media	1	1	1
Newcastle Housing Advice	2	1	0
Commercial Enforcement/Safety	2	1	1
Community Enforcement/Safety	15	4	1
Dogs & Pest Control	3	2	0
Private Sector Housing	4	3	0
Garage/Depot	1	0	0
Community Recreation	1	0	1
J2	24	19	1
Bereavement	1	0	0
Parks & Open Spaces	4	1	2
Street Cleaning	1	1	0
Dry Recycling	59	34	0
Food Recycling	16	9	1
Garden Waste	59	28	0
Household Waste	64	26	1
Trade Waste	1	1	0
Waste Strategy	2	1	0
Markets	1	1	0
Parking & Transport	2	1	0
Repair & Maintenance	1	1	0
Building Control	1	1	1
Development	15	5	3

Management			
Contact Centre	4	2	0
Kidsgrove Customer Services	1	1	0
Benefits	1	1	0
Council Tax	19	13	7
	316	165	21 (6.6% of Stage 1 Complaints)

Local Government Ombudsman 2016/2017

Complaints received	30
Complaints deemed invalid	2
Complaints referred back to the Council for local investigation	13
Complaints investigated by the LGO	13
Complaints closed after initial investigation	8
Complaints not upheld	3
Complaints upheld	2

More information can be found in the LGO's annual review letter and report which was considered by the Audit and Standards Committee on 25th September 2017 and can be accessed via ModernGov.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above statistics, the systems in place at Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council that deal with complaints appear to be working satisfactorily.