

# Royal Borough of Greenwich Complaints Policy

## 1. Introduction

This document outlines the Royal Borough of Greenwich's Complaints Policy.

This Policy applies to the majority of complaints received by the Council. However, there are categories of complaints (and appeals) that should be managed through different procedures, and these are listed in section 2 below.

Royal Greenwich is committed to providing high quality services. If services fall short of meeting high quality standards, we will do our best to rectify this in order to provide the best possible service.

Royal Greenwich views complaints as a valuable form of feedback and we are committed to responding to all complaints quickly, effectively and courteously and will do our best to ensure that any shortfall in our quality of service is improved upon.

## 2. What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Council or its staff.

Complaints may be relatively minor service issues which can be resolved after one, initial contact of may be more complex and go through the formal complaints' procedure.

The Complaints Policy applies to all services provided by the Royal Borough of Greenwich except those functions listed below which are covered by separate procedures.

Information is provided through the links below (and on the Council's website) to provide customers with information on how to make a complaint about these specific services.

In the case of complaints about schools, these should be directed to the individual school. Contact details for schools can be found on the Council's website.

- [Adult social care](#)
- [Children's social care](#)

- [How to complain about a councillor](#)
- [How to complain about us as a landlord](#)
- [How to complain about schools](#)
- [Appealing the handling of a request made under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations](#)
- [Appealing a Parking Fine](#)
- [Planning Application Appeals](#)
- [Housing Benefit Appeals](#)
- [School Admissions Appeals](#)

Complaints about matters of probity, legality or financial impropriety should be referred directly to the Council’s Monitoring Officer (Director of Legal Services) by emailing [legal@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:legal@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) or writing to:

**Director of Legal Services**  
**The Woolwich Centre**  
**Wellington Street**  
**London**  
**SE18 6HQ**

### **3. Making a Complaint**

Complaints may be received in a number of ways, including by telephone, email, by letter, by speaking to a member of staff in one of the Council’s contact centres or via the on-line form.

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the relevant procedures and will be referred to the appropriate department as soon as they are received by the Council.

### **4. The Stages of the Corporate Complaints procedure**

#### *Immediate Resolution*

Where possible, the Council will endeavour to resolve a service issue or complaint at the first point of contact with the person raising a concern.

#### *The Formal Complaints Stages*

There are 3 stages to the Council’s complaints procedure. These are



set out in the table below.

<b>Acknowledgement</b>	<b>Stage 1 – Initial Investigation</b>	<b>Stage 2 – Review of response</b>	<b>Complaint to Ombudsman</b>
<p>When a complaint is received, we will contact the complainant to confirm receipt.</p> <p>We will do this within five working days of receiving the complaint.</p>	<p>The complaint will be investigated and a response will be sent within 15 working days.</p> <p>If we are unable to respond within the timescale, we will contact the complainant to explain why.</p>	<p>If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to their complaint, they can request a further investigation by a different senior manager.</p> <p>This is a stage 2 complaint and should be requested within two months of the date of the Council’s initial response to the complaint.</p> <p>The investigation will be carried out by a different senior manager and a response provided to the complainant within 20 working days.</p> <p>If the investigation requires more time, the complainant will be informed, and an explanation given.</p>	<p>If a complainant remains dissatisfied after the second investigation, they can complain to the Ombudsman.</p> <p>Most complaints are investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, while complaints relating to the Council’s role as a landlord are investigated by the Housing Ombudsman</p>

### **Outcomes**

There are three potential outcomes when a complaint is investigated:

*Upheld* – we find that the complaint is justified, and the Council will rectify the problem.

*Not upheld* – we do not agree with the Complaint.

*Partially upheld* – this is a combination of upheld and not upheld, meaning that we agree that there are some parts of the complaint where we need to improve our service and rectify any failings.

At each stage of the process, the complainant will be given full details of their next point of contact if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint.

## **5. Vexatious complaints**

People have the right to be persistent and to make any number of complaints.

However, there is a judgement to be made when persistence becomes unreasonable, and the complainant may be judged as unreasonably persistent or vexatious. Royal Greenwich has an established procedure which is available for staff.

## **6. Anonymous complaints**

The public has a right to raise complaints anonymously with the Council if they do not feel comfortable providing personal information.

Some types of complaint may not be possible to investigate anonymously, such as if the complaint relates to a specific circumstance.

If a member of the public wishes to raise a complaint anonymously, they should include as many details as possible to enable the Council to investigate the issues raised in the complaint.

## **7. Confidentiality**

When the Council receives a complaint, the identity of the complainant will be made known only to those who need to consider or know about the complaint. Royal Greenwich collects the following information:

- Name of complainant
- Address of complainant
- Contact details – telephone and e-mail
- Service affected (including directorate, division and service name)
- Problem description
- Date of problem
- Date of complaint
- Who is dealing with it

- Copies of letters/e-mails etc.
- Whether the complaint is a repeat complaint by the same individual or by a different individual about the same service
- Whether the individual is a repeat complainant

Royal Greenwich measures its performance in dealing with complaints. Information in reports is anonymised and does not focus on specific complaints.

Additionally, personal data relating to a complainant does not go beyond the people who are investigating the complaint unless there are exceptional circumstances, whereupon the complainant will be informed.

## **8. Services provided by third parties / partners**

A number of services are provided through contractual arrangements, by the voluntary and community sector and arrangements with other third parties.

Where these arrangements are in place, the commissioning department should ensure that, through its contractual arrangements, clear complaints procedures are agreed and are in place for complaints handling and monitoring.