

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Corporate Complaints

How to contact us?

If you have a complaint you can contact us in a number of ways:

Via the online form on the Council website: www.rotherham.gov.uk/complaints

Email: complaints@rotherham.gov.uk

By post: Using a complaint form or by letter.

No postage is required for posting forms or letters to us, as you may use our freepost address below.

The Complaints Manager
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
(FREEPOST RTCT-XKLS-ZHAZ)
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

By telephone: Our contact number is (01709) 382 121. The customer service representative handing your call will direct you to the appropriate department.

By text: Our contact number is 07860 021 447

In person: At one of our Customer Service Centres or any Council reception.

Your Complaints

If we have failed to provide a service to you or if you are dissatisfied with the service that you have received then please tell us. In most cases we hope to be able to resolve these with the member of staff you have been dealing with, and will use your feedback to help us make improvements. Where this is not possible we have a formal complaints process to fully consider your complaint.

Please note that Adult Social Care, Children and Young Peoples, and Housing Services have a separate procedure as determined by the Government.

The Complaints procedure

Who can complain?

Anyone who feels that they have had a poor service from us, or from someone providing the service for us, and have tried to get the problem solved by speaking to someone in the relevant department.

If you complain to us but feel you can't give us your name, we will not deal with your complaint under the complaints procedure. However, we will ensure steps are taken to deal with the issue.

What is a complaint?

- You make a complaint when you are not happy with the standard of service you have had from us
- We will not treat certain issues as complaints, and where this is the case, we will tell you. For example
 - If you ask us for a service – such as reporting a faulty streetlight that needs attention
 - If you ask us for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice – such as a request for information on our winter gritting policy for icy roads and pavements
 - Any issue that is being dealt with in court – such as where we are pursuing legal action against someone in the magistrates' court for giving a false trade description

What happens then?

You can make an official complaint in one of the ways described on page 3. We will treat your complaint as confidential at all times, and will deal with it as follows:

Stage 1: Response from the line manager

- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days of receiving it
- You will receive a full response within ten working days, and where this is not possible, we will send you a letter explaining reasons for the delay and give a date when you can expect a full response

Stage 2: Investigation by senior independent officer

- We will acknowledge receipt of your letter within three working days of receiving it
- We will give you the name and phone number of the complaints officer who is investigating your complaint. This will not be the same person

who has investigated stage 1 of your complaint, and will work independently of the service area involved in your complaint

- The officer will contact you to arrange an interview so they can talk to you about your complaint and find out what you think we should do to put it right
- The officer will investigate your complaint in line with our 'Good Practice Guidelines for Investigating Officers' and write a report on their findings.
- They will send the report to the suitable Director to make a decision
- You will receive a full written response within 25 working days of us receiving your letter, or we will tell you about any delay and give you a new date for when you should receive a response
- The response will give you the chance to send your complaint to the final stage of the complaints procedure should you so wish
- Please write back within one month of receiving the response saying why you want to go to stage 3

Stage 3: Complaints review panel meeting

- We will acknowledge receipt of your letter within three working days of receiving it
- A member of our Democratic Services will contact you within five working days of receiving the letter, and will arrange for your complaint to be heard by an appeals panel
- A date will be set for the hearing within 20 working days of your letter, but at a time that is convenient for you to attend

We will send you a summary of your complaint which will:

- outline the complaint;
- say how you want the complaint to be solved;
- detail the steps we have already taken to solve the complaint; and
- contain the Director's views.

We will also send this report to the members of the panel.

- You may bring a friend, adviser, or interpreter who may speak for you, but they should not be a lawyer who is working for you
- We will send you a note to explain the panel's procedures before the meeting
- The panel will include three Councillors and someone from our Legal Services team, who will act as clerk to the panel
- You will have copies of any relevant letters or evidence that will be put before the panel so that you can respond to any questions they may ask
- You will receive a full written report of the panel's decision within five working days of the hearing

Solutions

If your complaint is accepted, the service involved will try to solve the problem by doing the following.

- Apologising to you and explaining what went wrong
- Providing the service you are entitled to receive
- Changing procedures so that the mistake is not repeated

If you are not satisfied with how we have handled your complaint then you may wish to complain directly to the Local Government Ombudsman. Their contact details are below. Please note that the ombudsman will not act until any complaint has been considered under the Council's complaint procedure.

Address: The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Phone: 0300 061 0614
Fax: 024 7682 0001

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Complaints procedure – Housing Services

How to contact us?

If you have a complaint, suggestion or compliment you can contact us in a number of ways:

Via the online form on the Council website:

www.rotherham.gov.uk/complaints

Email: complaints@rotherham.gov.uk

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In person: At one of our Customer Service Centres or any Council reception point.

Your Complaints

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The Complaints Procedure

Who can complain?

Anyone who feels that they have had a poor service from us or from someone providing the service for us and have tried to get the problem solved by speaking to someone in the relevant department.

If you complain to us but feel you can't give us your name, we will not deal with your complaint under the complaints procedure. However, we will ensure steps are taken to deal with the issue.

What is a complaint?

- You make a complaint when you are not happy with the standard of service you have had from us. This will affect you or your family and friends and will need a particular response from us.
- We will not treat certain issues as complaints and where this is the case, we will tell you. For example
 - If you ask us for a service – such as reporting a repair or anti-social behaviour
 - If you ask us for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice – such as a request for information regarding tenant alterations
 - Any issue that is being dealt with in court – such as where we are pursuing legal action against someone for rent arrears
 - Any issue that is subject to a current insurance claim
 - Any issue which is agreed Council Policy, where the policy has been followed

What happens then?

You can make an official complaint in one of the ways described on page 1. We will treat your complaint as confidential at all times, and will deal with it as follows:

Stage 1: Response from the line manager

- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days of receiving it
- You will receive a full response within ten working days and where this is not possible, we will send you a letter explaining reasons for the delay and give a date when you can expect a full response

Stage 2: Investigation by senior independent officer

- We will acknowledge receipt of your letter within three working days of receiving it

- We will give you the name and phone number of the complaints officer who is investigating your complaint. This will not be the same person who has investigated stage 1 of your complaint and will work independently of the service area involved in your complaint
- The officer will contact you to arrange an interview so they can talk to you about your complaint and find out what you think we should do to put it right
- The officer will investigate your complaint in line with our 'Good Practice Guidelines for Investigating Officers' and write a report on their findings
- They will send the report to the Director to make a decision
- You will receive a full written response within 25 working days of us receiving your letter, or we will tell you about any delay and give you a new date for when you should receive a response

Solutions

If your complaint is accepted, the service involved will try to solve the problem by:

- Apologising to you and explaining what went wrong
- Providing the service you are entitled to receive
- Changing procedures so that the mistake is not repeated

Housing Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied with how we have handled your complaint then you may wish to complain directly to the Housing Ombudsman Service. The Housing Ombudsman will not act until any complaint has been considered under the Council's complaint procedure and after more than eight weeks have elapsed since the completion of the Stage 2 complaint.

During the eight week waiting period you have the choice of taking your complaint to a Designated Person. A designated person can be a MP, a local Councillor or a Tenant Complaint Panel. The designated person may resolve the complaint directly, refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman or may decline doing either. If they decline you may approach the Housing Ombudsman directly if more than eight weeks have elapsed since the completion of the Council's internal complaint procedure.

Designated Person - The Council would discuss the issues with your selected designated person and liaise with yourself and provide their view following consideration of both sides of the complaint. They may also suggest possible outcomes, liaising between you and the Council.

Tenant Complaint Panel - The Tenant Complaint Panel is one that is recognised by the Council to play a formal role in resolving complaints once the Council's internal complaint procedure is complete. You and a

representative from the Council would be invited to attend a meeting to provide information to the Panel. The Panel will consider the complaint and provide a decision in writing following the meeting.

The Housing Ombudsman service can be contacted as follows:

Address: Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN

Phone: 0300 111 3000

Fax: 020 7831 1942

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Additional Information

The following sets out the complaint categories that can be referred to the Housing Ombudsman. However, please note that inclusion of a complaint category does not mean that the Ombudsman will necessarily investigate the complaint. The Ombudsman may decide that part or all of the complaint falls outside their jurisdiction or they may decide that there are other reasons why they should not investigate. But if that is the case, they will explain why.

Leasehold services

- Shared ownership and sales processes for leasehold properties
- Shared ownership stair-casing
- Full ownership and sales processes for leasehold properties owned by housing associations
- Right to buy and right to acquire for tenants of housing associations
- Repair responsibilities under the lease
- Mortgage rescue schemes
- Leasehold services provided by the landlord

Moving to a property

- Transfer applications that are outside Housing Act 1996 Part 6
- Type of tenancy offered
- Mutual exchange
- Decision to renew a fixed tenancy
- Decants
- Mobility Schemes

Occupancy rights

- Terms and conditions of occupancy rights
- Succession
- Assignment
- Ending a tenancy (e.g. notice periods)

- Abandonment of property
- Possession proceedings

Property condition – repairs and improvements

- Condition of the property when first let (e.g. void works)
- Responsive repairs
- Planned maintenance or cyclical works
- Improvement works carried out by landlord or tenant
- Rechargeable repairs
- Disabled adaptations

Tenant behaviour

- Anti-social behaviour
- Noise nuisance
- Harassment

Estate management

- Cleaning or repairs of communal areas
- Boundary issues
- Grounds maintenance
- Parking
- Use of communal areas

Rent and service charges

- Rent or service charges

Complaint handling

- The landlord's handling of a complaint in their complaint process, including delays

Compensation

- Home loss or disturbance payments
- Improvements carried out by the tenant

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Complaints procedure – Children and Young People Services

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By text: Our contact number is 07860 021 447

In person: At one of our Customer Service Centres or any Council reception point.

Your Complaints

If we have failed to provide a service to you or if you are dissatisfied with the service that you have received then please tell us. In most cases we hope to be able to resolve these with the member of staff you have been dealing with and will use your feedback to help us make improvements.

Where this is not possible we have a formal complaints process to fully consider your complaint.

The Complaints Procedure

Who can complain?

Anyone who feels that they have had a poor service from us or from someone providing the service for us and have tried to get the problem solved by speaking to someone in the relevant department.

If you complain to us but feel you can't give us your name, we will not deal with your complaint under the complaints procedure. However, we will ensure steps are taken to deal with the issue.

What is a complaint?

If we have failed to provide a service to you or if you are dissatisfied with the service that you have received then please tell us. In most cases we hope to be able to resolve these with the member of staff you have been dealing with, and will use your feedback to help us make improvements. Where this is not possible we have a formal complaints process to fully consider your complaint.

Anyone who feels that they have had a poor service from us, or from someone providing the service for us, and have tried to get the problem solved by speaking to someone in the relevant department.

If you complain to us but feel you can't give us your name, we will not deal with your complaint under the complaints procedure. However, we will ensure steps are taken to deal with the issue.

You make a complaint when you are not happy with the standard of service you have had from us. This will affect you or your family and friends and will need a particular response from us.

We are not able to accept some complaints and where this is the case, we will tell you. For example:

- If your complaint relates to something that happened more than 12 months ago, unless there is a reason why you could not complain before
- If your complaint relates to an issue that is being/has been dealt with in Court – such as the content of a report which a social worker has written for Court

We will not treat certain issues as complaints and where this is the case, we will tell you. For example:

- If you ask us for a service – such as a request for a social worker to contact you or you are requesting a copy of an assessment document
- If you ask us for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice – such as a request for information regarding Safeguarding Procedures

What happens then?

Stage 1: Response from the line manager or service manager

Your complaint will be investigated by a manager from the service which the complaint is about. We will aim to give you a full response to your complaint within 10 working days. However, if your complaint is complicated this may take up to 20 working days.

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaints, you can ask for your complaints to be investigated by an independent person.

Stage 2: Investigation by independent person

We will appoint someone independent from the Council to investigate your complaint. We will also appoint a separate independent person to oversee the investigation of the complaint, if this is necessary. We will aim to give you a full response to your complaint within 25 working days. However, if your complaint is complicated this may take up to 65 working days.

If you are still unhappy with the response you received, you can ask for your complaints to be considered at a Stage 3 Review Panel.

Stage 3: Complaints review panel meeting

A review panel will be set up to carry out a review of your complaint. The review panel will consist of 3 people who are independent from the Council. There are different time stages to the Review Panel process which in total take up to 50 working days.

Solutions

If your complaint is accepted, the service involved will try to solve the problem by doing the following:

- Apologising to you and explaining what went wrong
- Providing the service you are entitled to receive
- Changing procedures so that the mistake is not repeated

If you are not satisfied with how we have handled your complaint then you may wish to complain directly to the Local Government Ombudsman. Their

contact details are below. Please note that the ombudsman will not act until any complaint has been considered under the Council's complaint procedure.

Address: The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Phone: 0300 061 0614

Fax: 024 7682 0001

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Complaints procedure – Adult Services

How to contact us?

If you have a complaint, suggestion or compliment you can contact us in a number of ways:

Via the online form on the Council website:

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Email: complaints@rotherham.gov.uk

By post: Using a complaint form or by letter.

No postage is required for posting forms or letters to us, as you may use our freepost address below.

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Your Complaints

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The Complaints Procedure

Who can complain?

Anyone who feels that they have had a poor service from us or from someone providing the service for us and have tried to get the problem solved by speaking to someone in the relevant department.

If you complain to us but feel you can't give us your name, we will not deal with your complaint under the complaints procedure. However, we will ensure steps are taken to deal with the issue.

What is a complaint?

You make a complaint when you are not happy with the standard of service you have had from us.

We will not treat certain issues as complaints, and where this is the case, we will tell you. For example:

- If you ask us for a service – such as making a request for social care assessment
- If you ask us for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice – such as a request for information on our direct payments policy
- Any issue that is being dealt with in court

What happens then?

If you want us to deal with your feedback as a formal complaint we will:

- Listen to the specific complaint(s) you want us to investigate
- Agree and confirm who will investigate and respond to your complaint(s)
- Agree an action plan detailing how and when you can expect a response
- Agree an outcome with you

We will aim to respond to you within 10 working days of receiving your complaint. In more complicated cases we may need a little more time to investigate further but we will always respond to you within 20 working days of receiving your complaint.

We will contact you to ask you how you would like your complaint to be dealt with and to let you know who will be dealing with your complaint.

We will also ask the person investigating your complaint to contact you and talk to you about your concerns, both during and after the investigation.

If you are not satisfied with our response you have the right to ask the Local Government Ombudsman (address at the end of this section) to consider your complaint(s). However, we will also, with your agreement, continue to resolve your complaint with you. This may involve a more senior manager examining the issues or an external consultant may investigate your complaint in more detail. If you agree to this option you should be sent a response within 45 working days.

If you remain dissatisfied with the second attempt to resolve your complaint(s) you can still submit your complaint to the Ombudsman. In addition to this you may choose to ask us to consider the complaint(s) at a more senior level (usually a Director). If you decide to pursue this option we will ensure you receive a response within 20 working days.

Solutions

If your complaint is accepted, the service involved will try to solve the problem by doing the following:

- Apologising to you and explaining what went wrong
- Providing the service you are entitled to receive
- Changing procedures so that the mistake is not repeated

At any time following the receipt of your first response you can contact the Ombudsman at:

Address: The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Phone: 0300 061 0614
Fax: 024 7682 0001