

Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure Guidance Note

1. Our Commitment to you

1.1 West Midlands Councils is committed to providing an efficient and good quality service. We aim to act promptly and give helpful, courteous and informative help and advice.

1.2 We welcome your compliments, complaints and suggestions as part of our commitment to providing a good service. We would like to know when we have done things well; if we have failed to provide you with the level of service you would expect; or if you have any suggestions for improvements.

1.3 We will handle all complaints fairly, politely and within agreed timescales and will also pass on any compliments to the relevant staff, whilst respecting your right to confidentiality.

2. Types of Complaint

2.1 A complaint about the service we provide might include the following:

- **where you consider the attitude** and conduct of an individual member of staff to be inappropriate
- **where you feel the quality** of service has not met your expectations
- **where you feel that there has been a case of maladministration** e.g. failing to follow the right procedures
- **where you feel that there have been delays** in receiving information or a response from us

2.2 We are unable to handle some complaints because they are outside our jurisdiction. If this is the case we will try and let you know to whom your complaint should be addressed. This could include;

- A request for information (see our Access to Information Policy)
- A query or comment about Government policy
- A complaint about a political party
- Complaints about individual local authorities

3. How to make a complaint, compliment or suggestion

We have a four-stage process to ensure that if you are not happy with the initial response provided to you, you can ask more senior people to consider the issue again.

3.1 **Stage 1: (Informal Resolution)**

You should first communicate your complaint/compliment/comment directly and informally with the person with whom you have been in contact. You can express your views by letter, fax, email or telephone.

3.2 **Stage 2: (Formal Complaint to Director of Service)**

If you are not satisfied with the response to a complaint made informally, you may request in writing that the issue be considered by the relevant Director of Service and you may request this by letter, fax or email.

3.3 **Stage 3: (Formal Complaint to Chief Executive)**

If you are still not satisfied with our response to your formal complaint, you can write directly to the Chief Executive.

Chief Executive
West Midlands Councils
The Partnership Centre
Albert House
Quay Place
92-93 Edward Street
Birmingham, B1 2RA

3.4 **Stage 4: (Appeal to an independent person)**

The Chief Executive will determine if a complaint warrants further independent consideration.

4. Our Promise to you

- 4.1 All communications will be acknowledged within 5 working days and a full reply will be provided normally within 15 working days. Where the issue is complex and we need more time to investigate, we will give you a date when you can expect a full reply and from whom.

5. Abusive callers

- 5.1 We strive to provide a high quality service to all who contact us. In return our employees have the right to be treated with courtesy and politeness. If contact or correspondence (including email) is abusive, malicious or constitutes a personal attack, we reserve the right to limit our response to an acknowledgement. If any of our staff are subjected to abusive behaviour they have been given permission to offer one "warning" and then either walk away or in the case of a phone call, put the phone down. The abusive behaviour will be recorded and the Chief Executive will be informed.