



Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy

Version: 1.2

Review Date: April 2019

Owner: Performance and Community

The Policy

Erewash Borough Council strives to provide excellent services to all residents and visitors to the borough. This policy provides you with all the information you need to tell us when we have achieved this, or to comment or make suggestions.

We know that things can sometimes go wrong, and if this happens we would like you to tell us. We welcome your feedback and hope to use your comments, compliments and complaints to identify areas for improvement.

This policy is published on our website and covers all services provided by the Council.

Our Customer Promises

Our staff will be friendly, helpful and respectful.

Our staff will be empowered to deal with your complaints at first contact, wherever possible.

Our staff will be knowledgeable and take ownership of a problem and help identify a solution.

We will apologise when we get something wrong and do our best to put it right.

Our building and reception areas will be accessible, clean and welcoming with visible signage and up to date information.

We will apply our services fairly and consistently and will not discriminate against you.

We will answer correspondence within 10 workings days, or let you know that we will have to take longer.

If we put your call through to someone we will explain to them what you have told us before putting you through.

Keep you informed of progress, especially if something changes.

We will provide you with a number of methods to contact us and contact you in the way you have said you prefer, wherever possible.

Keep our website and information available to you free of jargon and up to date.

What you can do for us ...

The Council has respect for all its customers and employees and our aim is to provide all our customers with a high level of service and we ask that you help us with this by:

Treating our staff with respect

Not using bad language, being abusive or acting in a threatening manner

Providing the information we need to deliver our services

Telling us when something goes wrong

Remembering that we are here to help and assist you

Erewash Borough Council will not accept any form of abuse or discriminatory behaviour against our staff or our customers.

Comments

We continually work to improve the services we deliver and to tailor them to meet your needs. Your contribution is essential to making this happen. We welcome all suggestions and comments relating to how we can improve our services. If required we will send you an acknowledgement of your comment within 3 working days and a full response within 10 working days.

Compliments

We would like to hear when you feel we have provided you with a good service. We will pass on your compliment to a specific member of staff where you have told us that they provided you with a good service. We welcome the opportunity to tell our staff how you appreciate them and take that opportunity to thank them for doing a good job.

Complaints and Service Requests

We receive a number of complaints which are actually requests for service, and this can sometimes extend the time it takes to resolve your query. There is a "Report it" section on the website where you can tell us about instances of fly tipping or dog fouling. Also there is a "general enquiries form" on the "Your Council" page of the website where you can record any query for any of our services.

A complaint can be made when:

- We have failed to provide a service when we should have
- We have provided a poor standard of service
- We have made a mistake in the way we delivered our service
- We have failed to comply with our own policies or service standards

The complaints system is not for:

- Making a request for service
- Complaining about the behaviour of other residents
- Complaints about other organisations such as a social housing landlord or Derbyshire County Council
- Disagreeing with the content of our policies

Contacting Us

In all cases you can contact us by any of the following methods:

- By phone – 0115 907 2244 (8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on a Friday)
- By email – enquiries@erewash.gov.uk
- In writing to: Enquiries
Ilkeston Town Hall
Wharnccliffe Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire DE7 5RP

- Complete our online General Online Enquiries form, or the Comments, Compliments and Complaints form available at www.erewash.gov.uk

We use the feedback we receive to review the services we deliver to you, in this way you can make a direct contribution to the services you receive and how they are developed and improved. Your experiences help us to deliver our vision:

To put Erewash on the map – a first class Borough in which people have pride and where they choose to live, work and play.

The Complaints Procedure

Stage One

When you let us know that things have gone wrong, we will always try to resolve the issue straight away. However, if we are unable to do so, or you are unhappy with what we have done to put things right, you can raise a formal complaint.

Stage Two

If you are still not happy with our response or resolution, you can ask that your complaint is reviewed by a Head of Service, or relevant senior officer as a Stage 2 complaint. To do this, let us know why you are unhappy with our initial response and what you would like us to do to resolve the situation. Our Customer Care Officer will inform the relevant service that the complaint has been escalated and keep you informed of progress.

Stage Three

If you are still unhappy with our response you can apply to the appropriate Chief Officer, or Chief Executive to review your complaint as a Stage 3 complaint. You will need to write to us, either by letter or an email detailing why you are still unhappy and what you would like us to do to put things right. Our Customer Care Officer will keep you informed of the progress at this stage.

Service Standards

For all stages of complaint you can expect the following:

- An acknowledgement within 3 working days of receipt of each stage of the complaint, giving you a unique complaint reference number to make it easy for you to follow progress and to contact us
- The name of the person/department who will try to resolve the issue
- A full response detailing the outcome of any investigation within 10 working days.
- Advice about the next stage of the process and any time limits to your response.

***We will always try to provide you with a full response within 10 working days, however, if the matter is particularly complex we reserve the right to extend this period up to 28 days. We will let you know within 10 working days if we require longer to respond to your complaint.**

Whilst there is no specific time limit for following up on each stage of a complaint, we do ask that you let us know as soon as you are able if you intend to escalate the matter to the next stage. In some cases we may start the process at Stage One again, if for example we think that an unreasonable amount of time has elapsed.

Local Government Ombudsman

If the matter is still in dispute following completion of the full complaints process, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman for assistance in settling the matter. The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent body who investigates allegations of maladministration causing injustice to anybody who has complained.

The Ombudsman can be contacted at:

www.lgo.org.uk

phone: 0300 061 0614

The Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771
Coventry CV4 0EH

To help you, there is a leaflet about how to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman, which is available from all our public buildings, by telephoning or writing to the address above or by downloading it from the Ombudsman's website at www.lgo.org.uk. Cases will normally only be considered by the Local Government Ombudsman once the Council's own complaints procedure has been fully explored.

Unreasonable and Persistent Complainants

The Council's definition of unreasonable and persistent complainant behaviour is as follows:

“Unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants are those complainants who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with an authority, hinder the authority's consideration of their, or other people's, complaints and request for service.”

“The repeated and/or obsessive pursuit of unreasonable complaints and campaigns and/or unrealistic outcomes, and/or reasonable complaints and campaigns pursued in an unreasonable manner.”

There is a separate policy for handling these which can be found on our website.

Complaints about Elected Members

Should complaints be received regarding the conduct or actions of Elected Members, these will be referred to the Council's Monitoring Officer and considered in accordance with the Members' Complaints Procedure. <http://www.erewash.gov.uk/your-council/comments-compliments-and-complaints/council-member-complaints.html>

Complaints against companies and agents providing a service on our behalf

It is important to ensure that the process for dealing with complaints about someone who has provided a service on the council's behalf is dealt with in the same manner as if it was a member of our own staff. It is necessary therefore when procuring a service to ensure that the proper checks are made with regard to how a company will deal with complaints, comments and compliments.

Comment, Compliment, and Complaint Monitoring

The Council will produce reports that will show how your contact is improving services at Erewash Borough Council.

The Council will review the operation of the comments, compliments and complaints procedure and will update as required.

Do you need this information in another format or a different language?

Contact us at equalities@erewash.gov.uk

The Complaints Process

