

## Comments, Complaints and Compliments Procedure

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council aims to provide, the best possible range, level and quality of services required, within the resources available. As part of this process, the Council aims to listen and be responsive to what customers, service users and their representatives have to say.

One of the ways in which we acquire comments and opinions in order to influence service planning and delivery is through customer comments, complaints, and compliments.

The purpose of a complaints procedure is to put right what has gone wrong and then learn from it. This procedure is designed to comply with the good practice requirements as prescribed by the Local Government Ombudsman.

**Your comments about the services that you receive are vital to us. We will ensure we use this information to improve the services that we provide to you, our customers.**

### What we will do:

- Ensure that your comments are forwarded to relevant area within 24 hours so they can provide a comprehensive response directly to you.
- Endeavour to respond within 10 working days.
- Agree an extension to timescale with you if required.
- If you make a compliment ensure that this is shared with the service area/person concerned.
- Decide if a complaint falls within the Statutory or the Non-Statutory Procedure.
- Endeavour to resolve at the first stage of the procedure, but if you remain dissatisfied the following will explain what will happen next.

## Complaints

If you receive a service which falls short of your expectations you can make a complaint or comment about the service that you have received and we will investigate the concerns you raise.

The Complaints Procedure is based on the principle of a two stage process and at all stages we seek to provide a resolution to the issues raised at the earliest opportunity.

### **Stage 1: Formal Complaints:**

In the first instance a complaint will be allocated to a senior manager from the service area complained about. An investigation will take place and you will be provided with a response within 10 working days. This can be extended up to 20 working days where there is reason to do so.

### **Stage 2: Independent Review:**

Where a customer remains dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response they can request a review by an appropriate person independent of the service area being complained about.

Complaints at stage 2 should be responded to within 25 working days but can be extended up to 65 working days for complex cases or where there is a reason to extend. You will be kept informed of the timescales throughout the procedure.

When the investigation is completed a report will be prepared for the attention of the appropriate Director of Service, who will respond to the recommendations made within the report.

You will receive a copy of the report and the Directors response and be advised of what to do next should you wish to pursue your complaint.

## The Local Government Ombudsman

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint you will be advised that you may contact the Local Government Ombudsman. Their address and telephone number

### **Contacts:**

Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH

Telephone Number: 0300 061 0614

The following are contacts from Sandwell MBC should you wish to register a complaint. You can also request a form to be sent out to register complaints, enquiries or compliments.

**Contacts:**

Telephone: 0845 359 7510

Email: [contact@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:contact@sandwell.gov.uk)

Website: [www.sandwell.gov.uk](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk)

Text: 'Sandwell Listen' then your message to 60003

Visit: One Stop Shop  
Sandwell Council House  
Freeth Street, Oldbury B69 3DE

Write to: Customer Services at above address

You can also access an online complaint form from our website:

[www.sandwell.gov.uk](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk)