

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The council welcome your feedback and it is very important to us whether it is a comment, compliment or complaint. We are committed to providing you with the best customer service possible but occasionally things don't go as planned.

We will use your views to look at our services and see how we can continue to build on the good aspects and look at how we can improve those you feel are not as good as they could be.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR FEEDBACK

There are a number of ways to submit your feedback:

- Complete the [on-line form](#)
- Fill in the customer feedback form and either post it or hand it in to us
- By telephone 01636 650000
- By email comments@nsdc.info

Please note that if you want to complain then this has to be either by email or by completing the form.

Whilst we welcome your feedback and will endeavour to respond to you, the customer feedback policy is not intended to cover issues where we have a process which enables you to report a matter to us or you have a statutory right of appeal. These include:

- Requests for a service e.g. reporting a missed bin collection
- Reporting anti-social behaviour e.g. a noise or a nuisance neighbour <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/noise/neighbournoise/>
- Requests for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice
- An objection to a Planning Application or a planning enforcement issue
- Complaints about formal decisions taken by a committee for which there is an existing right of appeal (either within the Council itself or to an independent tribunal)
- The outcome of an application for benefit or the council tax banding of your property.
- Complaints about councillors – please see The Standard Committee policy <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/standards/>
- Safeguarding – If a complaint is of a safeguarding nature, this will be dealt with through our safeguarding policy, a copy is available on our website. <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing/safeguardingchildrenandadults/>

In these circumstances we will let you know what the process is to report the issue or how to appeal. Sometimes your feedback will be regarding an issue which is not dealt with by the council. We will either pass your feedback to the relevant organisation or advise you who that is.

COMPLAINTS

We understand that at times you may be dissatisfied or concerned by the way a service is provided and you would like to make a formal complaint about this.

FORMAL COMPLAINT

Appendix 2

STAGE 1

- Your complaint will be received by the council's customer services team, who will send acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint within 3 working days.
- Your complaint will then be allocated to the relevant Business Manager who will conduct a thorough investigation of your complaint and will provide a response directly to you within 10 working days.
- Where this is not possible, prior to the deadline, we will offer a full explanation and advise you of an estimated date of response.

STAGE 2

- If you are not satisfied with your Stage 1 response, you have the opportunity to move to Stage 2 of our Complaints Procedure.
- At this stage your complaint will be referred to the Director of the business unit in which the complaint has been dealt with.
- They will be given all the complaint information and will conduct a thorough review of the investigation and the response provided to you at Stage 1
- The Director will write to you with the outcome of their investigation within 10 working days.
- If it is not possible to meet this deadline, we will contact you and advise you of an estimated date of response

OMBUDSMAN

- If your complaint has been through our system and you feel that it is still not been resolved to your satisfaction you may ask the Local Government Ombudsman to investigate.
- The Ombudsman is an independent investigator who looks into maladministration complaints against local authorities
- You may ask the Local Government Ombudsman to investigate your complaint at any time, however, the Ombudsman will usually only investigate complaints that have been through the Council's complaints system first, in order that the Council has had a fair chance to investigate.
- You may contact the Ombudsman at the following address:

Local Government Ombudsman
PO BOX 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614
Website: www.lgo.org.uk

You can complain to us directly or appoint someone to act on your behalf. This may be a friend, relative, someone you trust or a voluntary agency.

COMPLIMENTS

It is always good to receive a compliment and to hear when the council has performed well, or if a member of staff has been particularly helpful. Please let us know and we will pass your compliment onto the team or staff member that you have praised.

SUGGESTIONS

If you would like to make a suggestion about the council or any of our services we would like to hear. We will acknowledge receipt of your suggestion and will forward it on to the relevant Business Manager to consider your suggestion. They will contact you within 10 working days and will let you know whether your suggestion has been adopted. If it has not been adopted you will be given a reason to why.

PERSISTANT OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

There are occasions when a small minority of complainants become persistent complainers or make complaints that are vexatious, in that they persist unreasonably with their complaints, or make a high number of complaints to make life difficult for particular council employees or the council in general. This may involve making serial complaints about different matters or continuing to raise the same or similar matters over and over again.

A copy of the Policy on Unreasonably Persistent Complaints and Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour can be found on the council's website <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/contactus/>

ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

The council treats all complaints against us in the strictest confidence. We recognise that there may be circumstances when you would prefer to submit a complaint anonymously. However it is best if you do provide your contact details as it makes it easier for us to:

- address the issue
- work out how to investigate the matter
- understand the reasons for the complaint
- gain more information.
- reply to your concern and the outcome

The council will investigate anonymous complaints at our discretion, based on the following factors:

- the seriousness of the complaint
- the credibility of the complaint
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources
- if the allegations have been investigated previously.