

Customer Feedback

Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments

This fact sheet can be made available in other languages or formats on request by contacting 0161 770 6666. For further information please see our detailed fact sheet **Information for all**.

Customer Feedback

Anyone at all can make a complaint about the council.

We value your complaint, suggestions and compliments; they are very important to us. We welcome your comments so we can go on to improve our services in the future. We have a process for dealing with complaints, suggestions and compliments and this fact sheet will explain what you, as a customer, can expect when making a comment about a council service.

Complaints

A complaint is a way of telling the council you are not happy with a service and gives us the opportunity to put things right. We record and report customer complaints, as we have a legal responsibility to do so. Complaints can include a lack of response, discourtesy or a failure to meet deadlines.

Suggestions

Your suggestions will give us ideas on how we can improve a service, save money or provide information to you. We welcome any suggestions on how we can improve any aspects of our services to you.

Compliments

Compliments let us know when you are happy with our services and help us to know what we are doing well and how we could use this in other services.

The following sections of this fact sheet will give you the procedures so you can make a complaint, comment or compliment to us.

How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint, suggestion, compliment or service request to the council in a variety of ways:

- Complete the contact form available online at www.oldham.gov.uk/contact_us.htm
- In person at Access Oldham,
- By letter: Customer Service Team
 Performance, Service & Capacity
 PO Box 160

 Civic Centre
 Oldham
 OL1 1UG
- By telephone: 0161 770 5066
- By fax: 0161 770 3701
- By email: customer.feedback@oldham.gov.uk

If you are unable to do this yourself, you can ask a relative, friend neighbour or your local councillor.

How the council will deal with your complaint

We want to learn from the complaints made to us and so we will monitor them. Complaints we receive are shared with Management Teams, the council's Standards Committee and the council's Cabinet.

We deal with your complaint in three steps:

- Your complaint will be answered either by front line staff, supervisors or managers. We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and respond to you within 15 working days. If the matter is complicated, we will let you know how your complaint is progressing.
- If you are unhappy with the response you received in the first step, you have the right to have the complaint reviewed by a senior officer. They will investigate the handling of the complaint. You should get a response within 20 working days.
- If you are still not satisfied with the response of the senior officer at the second step, the complaint will be passed on to the Customer Service Team. Your complaint will then go to an independent senior officer to investigate. You should get a response within 20 working days. If the complaint is complicated this could take longer and we will discuss this with you.

Local Government Ombudsman

If you are still unhappy with the way we have handled your complaint, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman who will investigate. You can contact the Ombudsman in the following ways:

- By letter to: The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
- By telephone: 0300 061 0614 (LGO Advice Team)
- By e-mail: advice@lgo.org.uk

Please note that the Ombudsman will expect you to have given the council a chance to sort the complaint locally before getting involved.

Special Cases

We intend your complaint to be dealt with under this procedure. The following lists exceptions due to statutory and legal limitations:

- A Town and Country Planning Appeal against a refusal of Planning Permission
- A complaint where the customer has started legal proceedings or has taken court action. Not cases where a customer has simply threatened to start legal proceedings against the council.
- A complaint has already been heard by a court or tribunal including the Revenue Services Review Board appeal mechanism
- A complaint about social services provision covered by statutory procedures (i.e. Section 7B of the Local Authority Social Services Act, 1970 as amended by Section 50 of the National Health Service and Community Care Act, 1990)
- A school admission or exclusion appeal
- A staff complaint about a personnel matter, including appointments, dismissals, pay, pensions and discipline (but not from staff as service users)
- A complaint about a penalty charge notice issued by the Parking Control Service (except administrative issues) and the recovery process
- A complaint against the refusal of disabled badges for parking exemption

In these instances, we will let you know what the appeals or alternative process is.

Aggressive or obsessive complaints

We want to deal fairly and honestly with complaints and make sure that other service users, officers or the council as a whole do not suffer from people making false or malicious complaints. The Borough Solicitor will write to aggressive complainants to inform them that their behaviour is

considered to be unacceptable. Council staff will not tolerate aggressive behaviour, bad language, racist, sexist and discriminatory comments.

Anonymous Complaints

We understand it could be difficult for you to make a complaint if you feel it would result in a poorer service or you would feel threatened, We treat all complaints in the strictest confidence and it is your right to complain. If you do not give us a contact name or address we will not be able to get back to you with the outcome of the investigation.

Equalities Statement

We aim to handle all complaints fairly and honestly regardless of who makes the complaint. We treat all members of the community equally and will not favour any particular individual or group. English is our principal language but we can provide information in other formats and languages.

The council's full procedure can be found at www.oldham.gov.uk/contact_us.htm

It is very important for us to work in partnership with you and other customers. We will listen carefully to your views and what you have to say. We also work closely with other organisations; we believe this is the best way to provide services to you.

We value your comments and suggestions

We want to provide good quality service for people in Oldham and as we are a public service you have a say in what we do. We want you to be completely satisfied with our services but to ensure this we need to know what you think. What do we do best? Where could we improve things? Do you have any ideas or suggestions? Only by listening to you can we give you the service you deserve. If you wish to make a comment about our services you can do it in any of the ways listed in our 'Contact Details' section below.

Contact details

You can contact us in any of the following ways:

- By letter: Customer Service Team
Performance, Service & Capacity

PO Box 160
Civic Centre
Oldham
OL1 1UG
- By telephone: 0161 770 5066
- By email: customer.feedback@oldham.gov.uk