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Corporate Feedback Policy

Introduction

North East Lincolnshire Council is committed to giving everyone we interact with, or who uses our services, the opportunity to share their feedback, whether positive or negative. Your feedback helps us improve the services we provide. If something has gone well, please let us know so we can share and build on good practice.

How you can provide feedback

You can provide us with feedback in any of the following ways:

- **Online:** <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/your-council/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions/>
- **By e-mail** to feedback@nelincs.gov.uk
- **By telephone:** 01472 313131
- **In writing** to Feedback Team, Municipal Offices, Town Hall Square, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire, DN31 1HU

If you need help to provide feedback for example, due to a disability or language barrier, please let us know. We're here to support you.

Information in relation to data handling can be found using the following link:
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/your-council/information-governance/>

Types of Feedback

What is a compliment?

A compliment is a positive comment from a service user or external organisation about a service or staff member. We record all compliments received centrally and share them with the relevant team or individual.

What is a suggestion?

A suggestion is an idea for how we could do something better. We pass all suggestions to the relevant service for consideration, and they will respond where appropriate.

What is a service request?

A service request is a request to improve a service, fix a problem, or reconsider a decision. A service request can be addressed through normal service delivery processes, without the need for it to become a complaint. We aim to acknowledge service requests within 5 working days and inform you of escalation to the service.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of a service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.

It is important that you provide all relevant information and evidence in relation to your complaint for the purposes of the investigation. If the issues you have raised are not clear, we will make contact with you to clarify them.

Where the complaint has been written by an officer of the Council on your behalf, you will be asked to sign and confirm that it is an accurate record of your complaint.

The time allocated to investigate the complaint will not begin until clarification is received, or a complaint is signed by you as a true record.

If a complaint is made on your behalf, we will require explicit consent from you that you are happy to be represented, and you consent to your personal information being shared with your representative.

We are committed to handling your complaint effectively and in line with the LGSCO (Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman) Joint Complaint Handling Code.

The purpose of the Code is to enable organisations to resolve complaints raised by you promptly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements. Further information can be found using the following link: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/information-for-organisations-we-investigate/complaint-handling-code>

What's Not Covered by This Policy:

Where separate appeal or internal review processes are in place, these include:

- Statutory Adult Social Care complaints
- Statutory Children's Social Care complaints
- Housing Benefit or Council Tax support/appeals
- Planning applications and enforcement
- Penalty Charge Notices
- School admission appeals
- Special Educational Needs tribunals
- Complaints relating to schools and academies
- Complaints about councillors
- Freedom of Information Requests
- Data Protection Rights

Further details can be found via the following link [Complaints, compliments and suggestions | NELC](#)

Other matters which fall outside the scope of this policy:

- Legal matters or court decisions
- Noise nuisance
- Insurance claims
- Employment-related matters
- Decisions made by elected members
- Issues over 12 months old unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example when circumstances prevented a complaint being made sooner

We may also decide not to investigate a complaint if:

- The matter has already been fully investigated and addressed
- It doesn't justify the use of public resources
- No personal injustice has occurred

If this happens, we will explain our decision and advise you of your right of appeal to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Complaints relating to alleged criminal offences or fraud

Where complaints involve allegations such as criminal offences, legal breaches, health and safety risks, environmental damage, miscarriage of justice, or covering up such issues, they may be referred directly to the Monitoring Officer for independent review.

The Council will:

- Investigate all credible concerns.
- Protect complainants from harassment, victimisation, or unfair treatment.
- Refer matters to external bodies (e.g. police, auditors, Ombudsman) if necessary.

Complainants are protected if they act in good faith, reasonably believe the disclosure is in the public interest, and do not act maliciously or for personal gain. False or malicious complaints may result in appropriate action.

Commissioned Services

North East Lincolnshire Council contract services to providers which they deliver on our behalf. We work with the providers to resolve complaints with the initial investigation undertaken usually by the provider through their own complaints process.

If you require any assistance with your complaint, you can contact the council for advice.

Complaint Process

Stage 1: Service Investigation

- Your complaint will usually be investigated by an officer from the service involved.
- We aim to acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days where we will confirm who is investigating your complaint.
- We aim to provide a full response within 10 working days of the acknowledgement. If this is not possible, we will explain the reasons for this and advise when a response should be expected. You will also be provided with the details for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

If you're not satisfied with the outcome, you can request a Stage 2 independent review.

Stage 2: Independent Review

At this stage, the focus is not on reinvestigating the original complaint but is a review of the stage 1 investigation and your dissatisfaction.

If your complaint is escalated:

- It will be reviewed on behalf of the Chief Executive by someone who is independent of the service area complained about. This Independent Officer will be appointed by the Director or Assistant Director with overall responsibility for the service area your complaint relates to.
- We aim to acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.
- You may be contacted by the Independent Officer to discuss the reasons for your dissatisfaction.
- We aim to provide a full response within 20 working days of the acknowledgement. If this is not possible, we will write to you explaining the reasons for this and advise when a response should be expected. You will also be provided with the details for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

In some cases, we may decide not to carry out a Stage 2 review if:

- The complaint has already been fully addressed, and further investigation is unlikely to achieve a different outcome.

This is the final stage of the Council's complaint process if you remain dissatisfied you have the right to escalate your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, contact information will be provided within our final response.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman look at individual complaints about councils' and social care providers. Their contact information can be found using the following link: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/contact-us>

Remedies

While a complaint outcome cannot overturn a decision made by qualified professionals or formal panels, it can recommend that the decision be reconsidered.

If we find that you've experienced an injustice due to maladministration, we will aim to put things right. Our goal is to return you, as far as possible, to the position you would have been in if the issue hadn't occurred. We follow the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's guidance on remedies when making these decisions.

Further information can be found using the following link:

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/staff-guidance/guidance-on-remedies>

Reporting and Learning

Each year, North East Lincolnshire Council will publish a Corporate Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report alongside the Statutory Complaints reports.

This will include:

- A summary of complaints received and the outcomes
- Actions taken to improve services
- A self-assessment against the LGSCO's Complaint Handling Code

Further information in relation to the Joint Handling Code can be found using the following link: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/information-for-organisations-we-investigate/complaint-handling-code>

Managing Unreasonable Behaviour

We are committed to treating everyone with respect and handling feedback fairly and efficiently. However, in rare cases, a person's behaviour may become unreasonable or unreasonably persistent. This might include:

- Excessive contact or demands
- Aggressive or abusive language and behaviour
- Repeated complaints with no new evidence

In such cases, we may place restrictions on how you can contact us or interact with Council services. These decisions are made in line with our Customer Commitment which can be found using the following link:

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2023/05/Customer-Commitment.pdf>

Our Commitment to You

We value every piece of feedback we receive. Whether you're sharing a suggestion, or a compliment, your voice helps us grow and improve our services. By working together, we can build services that truly meet the needs of our community.

Thank you for taking the time to share your experience with us, we're listening, and we're committed to making a difference.

Further information in relation to how we can work together can be found using the following link: <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/your-council/data-feedback-and-engagement/engagement-consultation-and-involvement/>