



Corporate Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

Mansfield District Council is committed to providing a high standard of service to all our customers. As part of our continuing effort to improve the services we provide, we rely on the feedback we receive.

We want to know when we get it right so the standards can be maintained and we welcome your suggestions on how we can improve. We also want to know when something has gone wrong or when someone is not happy with any of our services.

This policy applies to anyone making a complaint against the Council and will:

- define a complaint
- clarify how a complaint can be made
- explain the complaint process
- set out how complaints are monitored and used to improve services

2. What is a complaint?

A complaint is:

“When you tell us that a Council service you expected either wasn’t delivered at all, or wasn’t delivered to your satisfaction”.

It is important for us to determine whether your dissatisfaction about a particular service is a complaint or a service request.

For some of our services (for example street cleansing or missed bin collections) we rely on our customers to tell us when something has gone wrong. These initial requests for service will not normally be treated as complaints, as we would like the opportunity to try to resolve the matter.

This policy will not usually apply to complaints that are already being dealt with through other more appropriate channels as follows:

- where an appeal body has been set up to deal with the issue (e.g. a planning appeal)
- data protection
- disputes between neighbours (dealt with separately through the respective anti-social behaviour procedure)
- complaints about Councillors
- internal complaints by staff

3. Making a Complaint

We strongly encourage you to submit your complaint online so that issues can be handled by the relevant service area quickly. However, you can make a complaint in whichever way is easiest for you:-

- Online at <https://portal.mansfield.gov.uk/portal/ManagingDirect/ComplaintInfo.aspx>
- Email us at mdc@mansfield.gov.uk
- Call us on 01623 463463
- Write to, or visit us at Civic Centre, Chesterfield Road South, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG19 7BH.

Complaints can be about many things including: -

- lack of response to an enquiry
- the quality of or a delay in providing them with a service
- on-going or persistent service problems
- poor customer care or conduct by a member of staff
- belief that they have been unreasonably disadvantaged by our policies or actions

We would usually expect a complaint to be lodged within 12 months of the event which is being complained about.

4. Our Pledge

- Your complaint will be received positively, however you make it
- We will carry out impartial and confidential investigations
- We will make sure that our staff are trained to handle complaints effectively and will try to deal with your complaint at the first point of contact where we can
- When we have got it wrong, we will apologise and put things right where we can
- We will respond to your complaint within the timescales outlined below
- We will keep you updated on progress, and tell you what will happen next
We will tell you how we make our decisions
- We will learn from what you tell us and use your feedback to improve our service

5. Confidentiality

General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) / Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)

Under the GDPR and DPA, Mansfield District Council, Chesterfield Road South, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. NG19 7BH is a Data Controller for the information it holds about you. The Council will hold the information you provide for the purpose of investigating and dealing with your complaint. The lawful basis under which the Council uses personal data for this purpose is Legitimate Interest.

Your data will be held permanently for the purposes of this complaint. Subject to some legal exceptions, you have the right to request a copy of the personal information the Council holds about you; to have any inaccuracies corrected; to have your personal data erased; to place a restriction on our processing of your data; to object to processing; and to request your data to be ported (data portability). The information provided by you may also be used for other functions carried out by the Council in accordance with GDPR and DPA.

6. Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints are difficult to deal with effectively as we may need to speak with or write to you in order to address their concerns. However, complaints made anonymously will be recorded and investigated in order to identify possible areas for service improvement.

7. Corporate Complaints Process

Stage 1

Front line resolution

Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straightforward complaints that require little or no investigation and any employee may deal with complaints at this stage. Our aim is to resolve your complaint at first point of contact where possible and certainly within 2 working days.

Where front line resolution is not possible your complaint will be passed to the relevant service for further investigation.

Investigation by the service

Each service will identify a suitably qualified officer(s) with responsibility for investigating and responding to complaints.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days and passed to an investigating officer. You can expect a decision and full response to your complaint within 10 working days.

If the investigation is likely to take longer, you will be kept up to date throughout.

Stage 2

If you are unhappy with the investigation and/or response at stage 1, you can ask for the decision to be reviewed. We will need to know why you are unhappy and what action you would like us to take.

Stage 2 complaints are investigated on behalf of the Chief Executive by a nominated officer independent of the service being complained about.

Your request for review will be acknowledged within 2 working days and a full investigation undertaken, decision made and response issued within a further 15 working days.

If the investigation is likely to take longer, you will be kept up to date throughout.

In our reply at Stage 2, we will tell you who to contact should you remain unhappy. Most complaints the Council receive will be dealt with further by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman; however as a social housing provider, some complaints will be dealt with by the Housing Ombudsman. You will be advised of the correct Ombudsman to contact in the response at Stage 2.

8. Unreasonable Complaints

If we consider that a complaint is unreasonable it will be passed to the relevant Director, who will consider whether further investigation of the complaint will be carried out.

Unreasonable complaints would include, but are not limited to:

- Sending the same complaint to a number of points within the Authority for response at the same time
- Making excessive demands on staff time and resources whilst investigating your complaint
- Refusal to accept a decision that has been made and upheld
- Resubmitting a complaint that has already been dealt with in the last 6 months
- Using abusive, threatening, or libellous language

If your complaint is considered unreasonable you will be informed in writing and advised of any action to be taken or right of appeal.

9. Learning from Complaints

Learning from complaints is a powerful way to help develop and improve Council services and to increase the trust of those using our services. Therefore we will:

- record, analyse, and report on the outcomes of complaints; and
- use this information to improve services to our customers and inform our approach to staff training and customer service

9. Responsibility

Whilst the Head of People & Transformation has overall responsibility for this policy, each service manager is responsible for the operational delivery of this policy and associated procedures, including staff awareness and training and communication to customers.

Implementation date: August 2019

Review Date: November 2019 (following the implementation of JADU CXM)

Originator: Christine Fenton, Corporate Customer Services Manager

Last Amended: