**Making a Complaint**

Quick Guide

**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 customers’ suggestions on how we can improve. We also want to know when something has gone wrong, so we are able to learn from our mistakes and improve our services.

**What is a complaint?**

A complaint is:

“Dissatisfaction, however this is expressed by the customer, which they wish to be treated as a complaint.”

The Housing Ombudsman’s definition of a complaint is also acknowledged as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.”

**What is not a complaint?**

* A request for service
* When there are other legal rights of appeal

 **How can I make a complaint?**

Whilst we strongly encourage customers to submit their complaint online at [www.mansfield.gov.uk/council-councillors-democracy/complaints1](http://www.mansfield.gov.uk/council-councillors-democracy/complaints1) so that

issues can be handled by the relevant service area quickly. Customers can also make a complaint:

• In writing

• By telephone – 01632 463463

• By email – mdc@mansfield.gov.uk

• In person

• Through a representative or advocate (see section 4 of the complaints policy)

**What we expect from you**

Before making a complaint, you are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant service to let them know about their concern. It may be that the problem can be resolved quicker as a service request and without using the Complaints Policy.

You also have the right to contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman at any stage of your complaint, although the Ombudsman may suggest that you go through all the stages of a Council’s complaints policy before they investigate your case.

Details of how to contact the relevant Ombudsman is available at the end of this document

**What you can expect from us**

Once a complaint has been logged you will receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days of receipt depending on your preferred method of communication. The Complaint will then be passed directly to the service area where it will be dealt with by a suitably qualified officer(s) with responsibility for investigating and responding to complaints.

In acknowledging your complaint, we will briefly confirm:

• Our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes being sought.

• What will happen next?

• When the customer can expect a response.

• Who is undertaking the investigation and how they can be contacted.

We aim to make a decision within **10 working days for stage 1 complaint and 20 working days for a stage 2 complaint.** However where the complaint is complex we may ask for an extension of the timescales, providing an expected timescale of no more than 10 working days with the reason clearly explained and provide details of the relevant Ombudsman

You will generally be advised of the outcome by the method your complaint was made unless you request a different method. The outcome will confirm the following:

• The complaint stage

• The decision on the complaint

• Clear reasons for any decisions made, referencing the relevant policy, legislation and good practice where appropriate

• The details of any remedy offered to put things right - this must set out what will happen and when

• Details of how to escalate the matter if you are not satisfied with the answer

We will sometimes provide a response before any outstanding actions are completed. Where this happens we will inform you when those actions will be completed, track those actions and provide you with an update

**Monitoring and reporting**

If you are a council tenant we will ask you to give us your feedback on how we dealt with your complaint and publicise the findings and any changes we have made as a result of your feedback

We will also produce and publicise on our website an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which will include:

* An annual self-assessment against the Ombudsman’s Code to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
* A qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance. This will also include a summary of the types of complaints we have refused to accept, if any;
* Any findings of non-compliance with the Ombudsman Code;
* The service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
* The annual letter about the organisation’s performance from the Ombudsman; and
* Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the organisation.

**Contacting the Ombudsman**

**Housing Ombudsman details:**

**Phone:**[**0300 111 3000**](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us/)

Phone line opening hours are:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9am - 5pm

Thursday 9am - 3.30pm

**Lines are closed for staff training every Thursday from 3.30pm to 5pm.**

**Write to:**
Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 1484
Unit D
Preston
PR2 0ET

**Email**: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

**Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman details:**

**Phone**: 0300 061 0614

Phone line opening times are:

* Monday - 10am to 1pm
* Tuesday - 10am till 1pm
* Wednesday - 1pm till 4pm
* Thursday - 10am till 1pm
* Friday - 10am till 1pm

**Write to:**

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

PO Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH