

A Customer Guide to the Warwickshire County Council General Complaints Procedure

Warwickshire County Council is committed to delivering a high quality service to all our customers but we recognise that occasionally things do go wrong. In these circumstances we want to make it as simple and quick as possible for you to raise concerns with us. We will learn from your feedback and try to improve so that the situation does not arise again. We see complaints and comments as an opportunity to improve not a problem to address.

We value our customers, and want you to have confidence in us. We want you to know what you can expect and if possible for the outcome to please everyone involved.

The majority of customer concerns are successfully resolved at the point of service delivery within three days. These do not need to go into the formal complaints procedure.

Sometimes a resolution can not be reached in this way and a formal complaint must be registered. We will do our best to handle the matter professionally and in a timely fashion. You have the right to take your concern to the Local Government Ombudsman at any time, but they will usually ask you to give us a chance to solve your problem first.

How to contact the Local Government Ombudsman:

0300 061 0614 or 0845 602 1983

The Local Government Ombudsman, Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH www.lgo.org.uk

The Complaints Procedure

This is the procedure for most complaints about a Warwickshire County Council service. It is intended to be used by customers or their representatives, who have been directly affected by our decisions, or the way services have been provided.

Concerns must be raised within one year of the problem occurring or you becoming aware of it.

Some service areas, such as adult and children's social care, have different procedures and we will help guide you through these.

Information about all procedures can be found on: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/complaints

Our general complaints procedure consists of: Stage 1: Resolution, and Stage 2 Review.

Stage 1: Resolution

The focus of resolution is on encouraging communication and exchanging information; exploring and explaining the thinking behind decisions and actions; and agreeing a way forward.

Local Investigation

We are committed to resolving complaints as close as possible to where the problem has occurred. In the majority of cases this will consist of a Local Investigation which will be completed within **10 working days**. The Local Service Manager is usually responsible for making relevant local enquiries to ensure it is a meaningful and informed investigation, which is completed quickly.

OR

Commissioned Investigation

In exceptional circumstances a more detailed, comprehensive approach may be required. This may happen when there are compelling reasons why a local investigation is unlikely to resolve the problem, or where the complaint is clearly complex or difficult. Someone from outside the service area may be asked to look at the problem. This is known as a Commissioned Investigation which will be completed within **25 working days** (exceptionally this can be extended to 35 working days with the agreement of the customer). An investigating officer will carry out the investigation reporting to the relevant Head of Service.

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Stage 2: Review

If the Stage 1 Resolution has not resolved the complaint to your satisfaction then you can request a Stage 2 Review. This is undertaken by the council's Customer Relations Team. The review will not reinvestigate the complaint, it will focus on understanding your continuing concerns and whether the Stage 1 Resolution process was undertaken fairly and that the conclusions reached were reasonable.

The Stage 2 Review process will look to identify any further practical remedies which may resolve your continuing concerns. The Customer Relations Team will report its findings to the relevant Strategic Director within 30 working days (exceptionally this can be extended to 40 working days).

If you feel your complaint is still not sorted out you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman.

WCC General Complaints Procedure

