Knowsley Council

Have Your Say

Council Compliments, Complaints and Feedback

Policy and Procedures

Reviewed November 2026

1. Introduction:

Feedback from residents and service users is important to the Council. You may want to suggest improvements or compliment us on getting it right.

When something goes wrong, we would like to hear your concerns. It is an opportunity to identify problems, learn from our mistakes, and take action to improve our services and the customer experience.

2. Before making a complaint:

If you are contacting us for first time to request a service or report a problem, please give us the opportunity to sort out the issue. You can tell us that we need to review or investigate something by our report it online forms. We hope to resolve most complaints this way, as it lets us put things right quickly so that you receive the service you deserve.

You can do this by visiting the service options available on our website or calling our service contact numbers .

3. Definition of a service request

Initial service requests are not part of the complaints process. Service requests are defined as "a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision". This could be you alerting us for the first time that action is required i.e. reporting a missed bin or a broken streetlight.

These requests may however become a complaint if we do not deal with them appropriately, as referenced in the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's complaint handling code:

- Service requests are not complaints but may contain expressions of dissatisfaction. Organisations should have the opportunity to deal with a service request before a complaint is made. A complaint may be raised when the individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing.

If the Council receives a request for a service via the Have Your Say process, the service request will be sent to the relevant Team for the request to be responded to.

4. **Definition of a complaint:**

A complaint is…

"An expression of dissatisfaction about the council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action taken, or the service was provided by the council itself or a body acting on behalf of the Council".

A complaint is not an initial request for service. If you have a problem with a Council Service, contact the department or local office first so that the problem can be dealt with quickly by the department concerned.

5. **What cannot be considered under the complaint's procedure:**

The complaint procedure does not include issues where there is a right of appeal, such as refusal of planning permission, a damage or injury claim, issue of a penalty charge or fixed penalty notice and blue badge, housing benefit or council tax reduction appeals. However, the complaint may be considered if it relates to the way the matter has been administered.

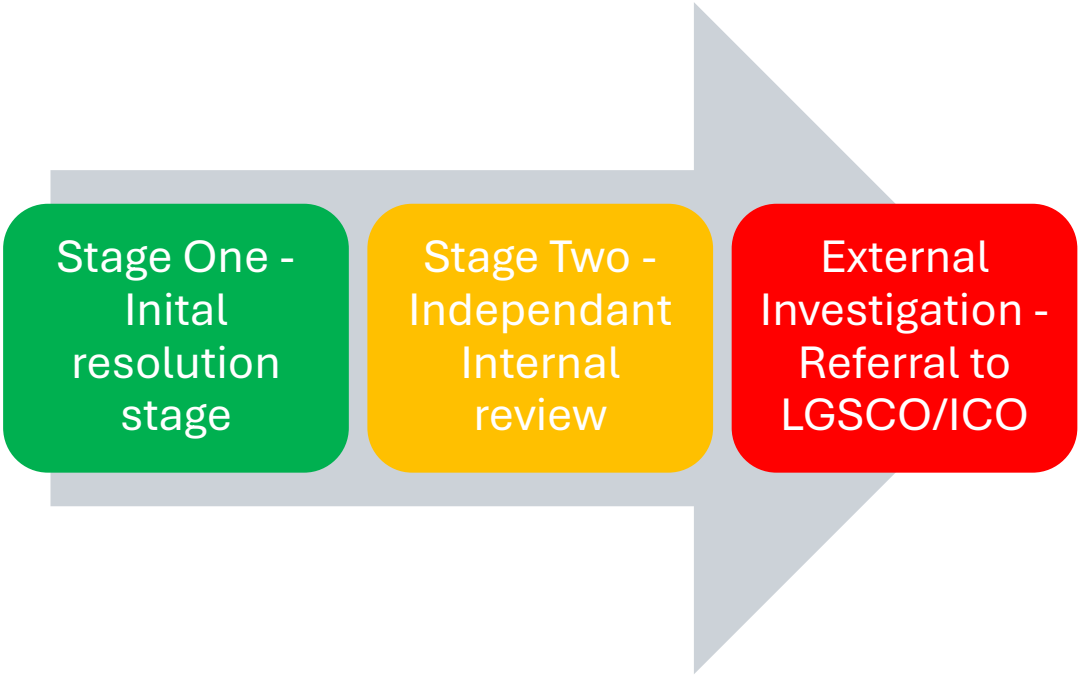
There are certain matters the Council do not deal with through the complaint process and stages in this procedure. The council offers a variety of services, and there may be more suitable methods for addressing certain issues.

Please see Appendix 1 for full information.

6. **Stages of the complaint's procedure:**

The Council Complaints Procedure consists of a two-stage internal process as illustrated below. Should you remain dissatisfied with the Council's final response to your complaint you also have the opportunity to pursue matters independently of the Council through the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

In the majority of cases the Ombudsman will not investigate a complaint until the Council's own procedure has been exhausted.



7. **Stage one**

Your complaint will be passed to the relevant service area, who will investigate the issue(s) and write to you with their findings. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and provide a response within 15 working days.

If the service requires more time to consider your complaint, we can extend the response time by 10 working days.

A response will be provided to you by email or letter depending on your preference. Occasionally, a complaint may be resolved by telephone, however you will receive a follow-up email or letter confirming the details of the conversation.

Every effort will be made to resolve your complaint at stage one. If you are unhappy with the outcome of your stage one complaint, you can progress to stage two of our procedure.

8. **Stage Two**

If you remain dissatisfied following our initial investigation, you can ask for your complaint to be looked at again by a senior officer.

We ask that that this is done within a reasonable timescale. We would expect a complaint to be progressed within 20 working days of a stage one response, however, this this can be extended in exceptional circumstances.

When requesting a review of your complaint, it is helpful for you to be clear in your reasons for progressing your complaint and what your desired outcome is.

We will appoint a senior officer to review your complaint independent of the service area you have complained about. The complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days as at the initial stage.

In the review, we will look at how we dealt with your original complaint, and we will also respond to any further related issues that you have raised with us (although not new complaints). Our policy is to respond in full to you within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint, wherever possible.

If we cannot respond in full within the acknowledged timescale, we will provide you with a holding response providing you with the date you should expect a response.

There may be instances when the council will advise you to refer your concerns directly to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) following the Stage One response. This will be clearly explained to you and will only occur when the council is satisfied that you have had an opportunity to have your queries considered and all issues raised by you have been addressed.

9. Next Steps

There is no further right of appeal to the council following completion of a review at stage two of this policy. Within our final response, we will inform you of your right to take your complaint further if you remain dissatisfied.

10. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman look at individual complaints about councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing public services. They are the final stage for complaints about councils and they are a free service. The LGO will not usually investigate a complaint until the council has had an opportunity to investigate and answer it first.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Phone: 0300 061 0614

www.lgo.org.uk

11. Submit a compliment, complaint or provide feedback:

You can submit your compliment, complaint or provide feedback online at https://knowsleytransaction.mendixcloud.com/link/haveyoursay

Alternatively, you can write to;

Customer Liaison Team
Knowsley Council
Nutgrove Villa
Westmorland Road
L36 6GA

12. **Managing Unreasonable Actions by Complainants**

Some customers act in ways we consider unreasonable when trying to resolve their complaints.

We take all complaints seriously and aim to resolve them fairly. Usually, we can work with complainants to reach a solution that works for both sides. However, if communication becomes difficult, we may need to take appropriate steps.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman defines unreasonable actions as:

> ***Unreasonable actions are those which, because of the nature or frequency of contact with an organisation, hinder the organisation's delivery of services or consideration of complaints.***

We have a specific policy to address these situations and outline our approach, which can be found on our website: www.knowsley.gov.uk/contact-us/have-your-say/policy-managing-unreasonable-actions-complainants