

Buckinghamshire County Council
Feedback and Complaints



Introduction

At Buckinghamshire County Council, we aim to be open and accountable; to consult and listen. We encourage all forms of feedback and complaints - so we can know what we are doing well, and identify areas where we can improve. Unfortunately we do sometimes make mistakes but, if this does happen, we will say sorry and put things right if we can.

Definition

We view a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction with the services or staff of Buckinghamshire County Council.

Aim

We will strive to 'get it right first time' by learning from our complaints and dealing with them in a positive and timely manner.

The Complaints System

Our corporate complaints system has 3 basic stages:

Stage 1 (Initial Complaint): Contact the person or section you are already dealing with, or about which/whom you want to complain, and express your concerns. (If you aren't sure who to contact, please see the 'Contact details' section of this booklet.) If you would find it helpful, please use the enclosed **Complaints Form**. (There is no requirement for you to use this form.)

Important

Please tell us: (1) What the problem is, and,

(2) What you would like us to do about it

Stage 2 (Senior Manager): If you are unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, you can ask for your complaint to be referred to the senior manager responsible for the area concerned.

Stage 3 (Council Complaints Officer): If you are still unhappy after the outcome of Stage 2, you can ask for your complaint to be investigated by the Council Complaints Officer.

What is not covered by this complaints system?

Some complaints are covered by a different procedure and may be dealt with in different ways - if this applies to your complaint, we will let you know. For example:

e.g.1 - If you are a client of one of our care teams (Social Services) and your complaint is about that care, it will be dealt with under their 'Hearing the Customer's View' procedure or 'Your Shout' (the children's version of the procedure) - for more information on this, please call **01296 382727**.

e.g.2 - Complaints about Council Policy will be passed on to appropriate County Councillors.

e.g.3 - Complaints about misconduct by councillors/members in local government are handled by the Standards Board for England. 'Misconduct' is where a member of an authority acts in a way that breaches (breaks) any part of their local code of conduct. (If you would like a copy of Buckinghamshire County Council's code of conduct, please contact us - see the 'Contact details' section of this booklet.) The contact details for The Standards Board for England are as follows: PO Box 36656, London, SE1 0WN, telephone 0800 107 2001, website www.standardsboard.co.uk

e.g.4 - Complaints about Schools - most complaints about a School will be dealt with through the School's own complaints procedure.

Timescales

At each stage we aim to acknowledge each letter within 10 calendar days and send a full response within 28 calendar days (or a letter explaining the reasons for the delay and a new reply date). [We will, of course, try to acknowledge and respond to your complaint much sooner if we can.]

Need any help?

If you require assistance in making your comment, compliment or complaint, please let us know when you contact us and we will try and help you - for example if English is not your first language, or you have a disability, or you need help understanding what to do.

This information can be made available in a variety of languages and formats, e.g. large print.

“I’m not complaining, but....” Comments, suggestions or compliments

If you wish to let us know your views on our services - comments, suggestions or compliments - please do contact us. We welcome feedback which lets us know that we are doing something well, or if you have a helpful suggestion on how we could improve our services.

Contact details

Remember, at Stage 1 of our complaints system, please contact the person/section with whom you are dealing, or about which you wish to complain.

If you don't know who to contact, please use the following:

- 1. Telephone** - please call our main switchboard on **01296 395000** and ask them to help put you through to the relevant service area.
- 2. Website** - look at **www.buckscc.gov.uk** to help you find the right section of our Council, or the on-line complaints form (see 'Feedback and Complaints' in the A-Z section).
- 3. Email** - send to **comments@buckscc.gov.uk**
- 4. Letter** - send to 'Feedback and Complaints', Buckinghamshire County Council, County Hall, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1UA.
- 5.** Contact your local County Councillor (to find out who your Councillor is, please ring **01296 382926**, minicom 01296 383111, or look on our website at **www.buckscc.gov.uk**).
- 6.** Visit one of our offices.

The Local Government Ombudsman

If you remain unhappy with the Council, you can ask the Local Government Ombudsman to look at your problem. This service is free and totally independent of Buckinghamshire County Council. Their 'Adviceline' telephone number is 0845 602 1983, website is at www.lgo.org.uk and address is Tony Redmond, Local Government Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP.

The Ombudsman will not normally investigate your complaint until it has been considered under our own Feedback and Complaints procedure.