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**Crystal
Mark**

Clarity
approved by
Plain English Campaign

Complaints comments and compliments



'leading for tomorrow'

Complaints

comments and
compliments

Introduction

We aim to give everyone the best possible service and we welcome your comments. We are always trying to improve, so we have set up a complaints policy to help us do this. Not only do we want to put things right if they have gone wrong, we want to know what we do well so that we can share good practice across the council.

Complaints, comments or compliments

You can help us by telling us the areas where we need to improve. If you are particularly impressed with a member of staff or service, please let us know. You can also tell us when you are not happy. Like any organisation, we rely on your opinions to monitor and improve how we are doing.

How you can tell us what you think

If you have any complaints, you can:

- talk to the member of staff you have most contact with;
- talk to the team manager; or
- write to the Head of Service (phone 01276 707100 to find out who this is). If you are interested in our complaints policy, please phone 01276 707100 or visit our website at **www.surreyheath.gov.uk**.

But we don't just want to know when things go wrong, we also want to know when things go right. If you have a compliment or any other comment, we have this leaflet and lots of other ways to contact us.

What is a complaint?

The Local Government Ombudsman defines a complaint as:

'A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction (whether justified or not) by one or more members of the public about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council'.

What **wouldn't** we treat as a complaint?

A complaint is **not**:

- asking for help with something like a noise problem;
- asking for information about, or an explanation of, one of our policies (for example, the level of Council Tax set); or
- trying to make an appeal to an independent tribunal (for example, planning applications).

What are the stages of making a complaint?

Stage one

We try to deal with the complaint informally.

This is when you tell us what area of our service or actions you are unhappy with.

Our aim is to deal with most of these complaints during normal everyday business, without taking the problem to senior members of staff.

Stage two

We treat the problem as a formal complaint.

You should make a formal complaint when:

- you are unhappy with the outcome of an informal complaint;
- you feel the council has done something wrong or failed to do something that has directly affected you;
- you feel a member of staff has behaved inappropriately; or
- the matter is complicated or serious enough that it needs a senior member of staff to deal with it.

The head of the service area you are complaining about will deal with formal complaints.

Stage three

At each stage of our complaints system you have the right to take things further if you are still not happy with the way we dealt with your complaint. The final stage is to appeal to our Chief Executive.

You must clearly give your reason for the appeal.

The Chief Executive will arrange for us to investigate your complaint and will then reply to you.

Stage four

Local Government Ombudsman

If you are still unhappy with the way we have dealt with your complaint after going through the other stages, you can take the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Local Government Ombudsman is independent of us and investigates complaints about local authorities.

The Ombudsman's details are as follows:

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London

SW1P 4QP

Phone: 020 7217 4620

Fax: 020 7217 4621

e-mail: enquiries.london@lgo.org.uk

Advice line: 0845 6021983

Or you can get a booklet called '*Complaint about the Council? – How to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman*' from our offices.

Contacting us

You can let us have complaints, comments or compliments by:

- letter, fax, e-mail, phone or in person.

You can also make a complaint by:

- filling in an on-line form on our website at www.surreyheath.gov.uk or by
- filling in the form in this booklet.

You can also ask your councillor to act on your behalf.

You can tell a member of our staff your complaint or make it in writing.

Our address is:

Customer Relations Development

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Surrey Heath House

Knoll Road

Camberley

Surrey

GU15 3HD.

Complaints, comments and compliments form



Please write in **BLOCK CAPITALS**, using a black pen.

Your personal details:

First names:

Surname:

Title:

Address and postcode:

Phone number:

Daytime:

Evening:

Mobile:

e-mail address:

Please give your complaint, comment or compliment clearly in the space below. Please remember to include relevant dates, time and places.

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There is more space over the page if you need it.

A large rectangular writing area with a purple border and 20 horizontal dotted lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice.

A large rectangular writing area with a purple border and rounded corners. The interior is white and contains 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

A large rectangular writing area with rounded corners, a purple border, and 20 horizontal dotted lines for text entry. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.

Equal opportunities – (you do not have to fill in this section.)

We will keep this information separate from the rest of the form so you will not be identified.

We would like to find out how our services effect different groups in the community. That is why we would like to know the following optional information:

Are you male? female?

Age in years: Race:

What is your religion or faith?

Do you have a disability? Yes No

If 'Yes', please say what.

What is your first language?

Could we have made our services easier for you to use?

If so, please tell us how below.

Please return the filled-in form to the address on page 4.



Surrey Heath Borough Council

Surrey Heath House, Knoll Road,
Camberley, Surrey GU15 3HD

Phone: 01276 707100

Fax: 01276 707177

E-mail: enquiries@surreyheath.gov.uk

Website: www.surreyheath.gov.uk