



## Blaby District Council Policy

### Service Requests & Complaints Policy

<b>Original Publish Date</b>	28 July 2020	<b>Review Frequency</b>	Every 2 years	<b>Current Version Publish Date</b>	27/02/2026
<b>Approved By*</b>	Group Manager / Portfolio Holder	<b>Approval Date*</b>	24 Feb 2026	<b>Version Number</b>	2.0
<b>Author Job Title</b>	Business Systems, Performance & Information Manager	<b>Service Area</b>	Information Governance	<b>Document Register Reference</b>	A 900

\*Approved by and 'approval date' above are in relation to the most recent version.

Review History			
Version*	Reviewed By (Job Title)	Review Completion Date	Brief Description of Changes (add 'no changes required' if applicable)
1.0	Information Governance Officer	16 October 2023	No changes required. Review was overdue by 12 months.
2.0	Business Systems, Performance & Information Manager	24 February 2026	Significant updates consisting of references to the Complaints Handling Code published by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This includes updated definitions of complaints and service requests and recommended processes for 'stage 0 / informal complaints', lessons learnt and annual reporting of performance. Predominantly these changes apply to sections 1, 2, 5 and 6.

\*Version number remains the same if no significant changes are made upon review.

## BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE REQUESTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

### Document Definition / Approval & Review

#### Definition

Blaby District Council policies ‘**outline a set of rules or principles that govern how the council (or services within the council) will operate**’.

Key published documents are approved for publication in line with the approval matrix illustrated in the Key Published Document Procedure.

Unless agreed by exception, key published documents must be reviewed at least **every 3 years** from the date of approval.

Significant updates/changes must also seek reapproval in line with the approval matrix.

### Scope

#### Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent process for customers that wish to raise a service request or make a complaint against the Council. It also provides guidance to assist staff to understand their responsibilities in respect of complaints from members of the public, partners and the organisations and business that operate within Blaby district.

This policy applies to all employees working for the Council. It also applies to Elected Members, consultants, agency staff and contractors working for the Council while engaged on Council business.

### Terms & Definitions

Definition of any acronyms, jargon, or terms that might have multiple meanings.

Term	Definition
LGSCO	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
BDC	Blaby District Council

### Section 1 - Introduction

Putting the customer at the heart of everything we do is one of our core values for staff at Blaby District Council. As an organisation, the Council is committed to getting things right first time but recognises that sometimes things do go wrong, and customers may not always be happy with the service they receive.

If this happens, or customers feel Blaby's services are failing to meet their needs, then the Council wants to know so that we can put things right.

The lessons learnt from complaints, will be shared within the organisation, and used to make improvements to our service and operational practices.

In writing this policy and devising our internal procedures, the Council has followed the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's (LGSCO) [Complaint Handling Code](#). The code outlines good practice for local Councils to follow when handling feedback and complaints. The LGSCO website also has a wealth of information for the public.

### Section 2 – Relevant Definitions

Effective complaint handling enables individuals to be heard and understood. The starting point for this is a clear understanding of what constitutes a **service request** and what constitutes a **complaint**. In most cases the Council should be able to put things right through normal service delivery processes.

The LGSCO makes the distinction below between service requests and complaints.

A service request may be defined as:

**“a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision”.**

This provides organisations with opportunities to quickly resolve matters to an individual's satisfaction before they become a complaint. Service requests are not complaints but may contain elements of frustration or discontent. However, they are likely to be of a nature that can be resolved relatively swiftly without investigation or inquiry by the Council. 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.

A complaint may be defined 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 or group of individuals.”**

At Blaby District Council, we adopt the same definitions as the LGSCO (as shown below), with the addition of a second stage for escalated complaints where the complainant remains dissatisfied after the initial response.

**Service level requests** – feedback that matches the LGSCO definition above. These are handled informally and typically channelled to the relevant department or service team. Service requests can usually be resolved quickly

## BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE REQUESTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

and efficiently by officers within the relevant department.

**Stage 1 complaints** – complaints that match the LGSCO definition above. These may be escalated from a service level request or may sufficiently fit the definition upon initial receipt. These are handled and monitored via a formal process described in section 6 of this policy. Complaints typically require investigation, review and a more detailed response to the complainant. Therefore, response timescales for complaints are likely to be longer.

**Stage 2 complaints** – These are escalated stage 1 complaints, where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of previous responses. As with stage 1 complaints, these are handled and monitored via a formal process, described in section 6 of this policy.

### Section 3 - Circumstances Not Handled as Complaints Under This Policy

There are circumstances in which this Complaints Policy will not apply. This may be because there is a separate process (such as complaints about elected Councillors, or about alleged Fraud), or because there is a statutory appeals process, such as with Planning Appeals, Council Tax or Housing Register banding. A full list of circumstances not handled by this policy are listed in section 12.

### Section 4 - Who Can Make a Complaint and Anonymous Complaints

Anyone who uses or is affected by our service can complain. This includes but is not limited to; residents, people who work in or visit the district, local businesses, and community groups.

The person affected may choose to ask someone else to complain on their behalf, such as a relative, carer or friend.

Complaints can also be made through a Councillor, Member of Parliament, or another elected person. Where appropriate, the Council will seek consent from the service user for us to correspond with any third party on their behalf. This ensures compliance with data protection requirements and that the service user's wishes are being fulfilled.

We value all complaints including those made anonymously.

Generally, we will consider anonymous complaints if there is enough information in the complaint to enable us to make further enquiries. If we receive an anonymous complaint, we will record the issues on our system as anonymous. This will help to ensure that the information we record is complete, allowing us to take corrective action where appropriate.

If an anonymous complaint does not provide enough information to enable us to take further action, we may decide not to process it. This judgement will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## Section 5 - How Can Service Requests and Complaints Be Made

### Service Requests

On most occasions, Council departments can quickly and efficiently respond directly to requests in a satisfactory way. If you have a query, need us to provide or improve a service, fix a problem or reconsider a decision, then please contact the relevant department directly, or via our customer service team.

The [A to Z of Services](#) on our website provides a directory to the information and help you need. These pages provide a range of webforms and contact points for you to submit your request. Alternatively, our [Contact the Council](#) pages provide the contact routes for our customer service team and our most prominent departments such as Waste management, Council Tax, Planning and Building control.

### Complaints

If you need to express dissatisfaction about the standard of service, the actions (or perceived lack of action) of the Council, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, then you may choose to submit a formal complaint. The process and timescales for formal complaints are described in section 6 of this policy. The ways in which formal complaints can be submitted are listed below.

- **Online form** - The most efficient and accessible way to make a complaint is via our online complaint form, which can be found on the [Feedback and Complaints](#) page of our website.
- **In person** – you can visit the reception at the Council Offices, asking the staff there to record your complaint on your behalf. The reception staff will submit your complaint via our online complaint form
- **By telephone** – visit our [Contact the Council](#) page to find our telephone number. When making a complaint by telephone, the Council staff answering your call will submit your complaint via our online complaint form

If you decide to make a complaint in person or by telephone, please be patient with the member of staff recording and submitting this on your behalf. Channelling all complaints via our online form means that they are recorded and distributed consistently and monitored to ensure the response adheres with this policy and our internal procedure.

## Section 6 - The Complaints Procedure

### Stage 1 – Formal Complaint

If a concern cannot be resolved to a customer's satisfaction at the point of service delivery, or if the customer wishes to make a complaint regardless, a formal complaint will be recorded.

If a complaint involves more than one service, a co-ordinated singular response will be sent to the complainant, wherever possible.

The council will nominate an appropriate officer to respond to the complaint at this stage. Typically, a Team Leader or Service Manager will investigate and respond to Stage 1 complaints, but this will depend on the seriousness and the nature of the complaint. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for more senior departmental managers to investigate and respond. The Information Governance team will liaise with relevant

## BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE REQUESTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

colleagues to determine this on a case-by-case basis.

If the complaint involves the Team Manager, a more senior manager will respond. An officer, against whom a complaint is personally directed will not respond to that complaint.

The Council will acknowledge all complaints within **3 working days**, and provide a full written reply within **15 working days**. The outcome of the investigation will be confirmed in writing clearly stating what decision has been reached. The 3 possible outcomes are shown below.

- Complaint upheld – where the Council accepts full responsibility for the issue.
- Complaint partly upheld - where the Council accepts partial responsibility for the issue.
- Complaint not upheld – where the Council does not accept that it is responsible for the issue.

Where the complaint is upheld or partially upheld, the response will contain:

- a) An explanation of what happened and why things went wrong.
- b) An apology for service failures.
- c) Details of the corrective action to be taken and appropriate redress.
- d) the timescale within which the action will be taken.
- e) Appropriate and clear instructions about anything the complainant needs to do.
- f) Where appropriate, details of the actions are to be taken to prevent a recurrence of the problem.

Where the complaint is not upheld the response will provide:

- a) Background information relevant to the complaint.
- b) An explanation of the decision.

The response will also inform the complainant that if they remain unhappy with the outcome or the way the complaint has been handled, they have the right to request a review of their complaint under the Stage 2 of the procedure. This must be done within three months of receiving the Stage 1 response.

### Stage 2 – Formal Complaint Review

If a complainant remains dis-satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 there is an option to request escalation and review of the matter by a senior officer who has had no prior involvement in the case.

At Stage 2, the senior officer will review the case to date and conduct their own investigations where appropriate. The potential outcomes of the review are the same as at Stage 1, whereby the complaint will be either upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld. The response will also contain the same components as at Stage 1 (as listed above) in terms of context, explanation, actions and timescales (where relevant).

As at Stage 1, the Council will acknowledge a request for a Stage 2 review within 3 working days, and provide a full written reply within **15 working days**,

At the conclusion of Stage 2, if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response or the way in which the complaint has been handled, they will be informed that they have the right to request escalation of the issue to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and provided with an explanation of how to do this.

### **Formal Complaint Stage 1 and 2 – Extension of Response Timescale.**

In most cases, the Council will respond to Stage 1 and 2 complaints within the committed timescale of 15 working days. However, occasionally this isn't possible for justifiable reasons. In these cases, the responding officer may request an extension of a further 10 working days. Where this is applicable, the Information Governance team will inform the complainant of the extension and the reason for this.

In exceptional circumstances (such as the absence from work of key individuals forming a crucial part of a complaint investigation) the Council will notify the complainant of the need to extend beyond 10 working days, providing the specific reasons for this and the revised timescales for a response.

### **Stage 3 – Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)**

If a customer is still not satisfied that we have resolved their complaint after proceeding through our complaints procedure, they can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). The LGSCO is an independent national service that investigates complaints arising from local government sector.

In most cases, the Ombudsman will normally only consider complaints if the complainant has exhausted the two formal stages of the Council's complaints procedure. However, the Ombudsman has discretion to investigate a complaint prior to the Council conducting its own investigation. For example, where the Ombudsman deems the complainant to be vulnerable or the case raises an issue of general concern to the public.

You can write to the Local Government Ombudsman at:

Local Government Ombudsman  
PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614  
Fax: 024 7682 0001

Website: [www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint](http://www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint)

## **Section 7 – Responsibilities of BDC Staff**

The responsibilities for the resolution of complaints are set out below for employees. The priority is the effective handling of complaints at, or close to, frontline staff or service manager. It is important therefore that all staff receive the necessary support and guidance to handle complaints.

### **All staff are responsible for the following:**

- Striving to resolve complaints at the point of service.
- Referring the matter to an appropriate officer to action.
- Understand the corporate complaints policy and procedures, and able to advise customers where necessary.
- Ensuring that the agreed timescales are met, and procedures are followed.
- Provide good customer service and to handle complaints with empathy and professionalism.

## BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE REQUESTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

### Information Governance Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring all complaints are managed in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy.
- Coordinate and record all incoming complaints and responses.
- Managing the Council's responses to all complaints referred to them by the Ombudsman.
- Ensuring data is recorded and retained in accordance with the appropriate requirements.
- Promoting the complaints policy to customers and staff

### Section 8 - Dealing with Persistent or Vexatious Complainants

On rare occasions the Council may receive complaints where the customer displays unreasonable behaviour or becomes unreasonably persistent in their demands for information or contact with the Council.

Complaints of this nature are dealt with under the Council's Vexatious and Unreasonable Persistent Behaviour Policy, which can be viewed and downloaded at our [Feedback and Complaints](#) webpage.

### Section 9 - Lessons Learned

Our 'lessons learnt' resulting from fully or partially upheld complaints are recorded centrally within our complaints database and used to drive improvement within our service areas and departments.

### Section 10 - Monitoring and Reporting

The monitoring and review of complaints provides valuable information about customer perception and service performance and can identify areas of organisational learning that drives service improvement.

Complaints statistics are reported annually to the Council's Scrutiny commission, who may make recommendations for improvement. The annual report is published on the Council's [Feedback and Complaints](#) webpage.

### Section 11 - Data Protection and Retention of Complaints

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. The handling and storage of personal data will be handled and stored in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy.

**Section 12 - Appendices**

**Complaints Outside of this Policy - Summary table of exceptions to the Policy**

There are several areas that fall outside of this Complaints Policy as they already have specific arrangements in place. Those areas are identified in the table below along with details of how to proceed.

<b>Area of Complaint</b>	<b>How to Complain</b>
Councillors and Elected Members	<p>If you have a complaint about a District or a Parish Councillor your complaint must be that the member(s) have, or may have, breached the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The Codes of Conduct are on the website of either the District or the particular Parish Council.</p> <p>You may also contact the Monitoring Officer if you require further information.</p> <p>For more information see:  <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/contact-us/standards-feedback-and-complaints/complaints-about-councillors/">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/contact-us/standards-feedback-and-complaints/complaints-about-councillors/</a></p>
Data Breaches	<p>If you are concerned about a data breach or how your personal data has been handled then you should contact the Data Protection Officer at <a href="mailto:GDPR@blaby.gov.uk">GDPR@blaby.gov.uk</a></p> <p>For further information see:  <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/your-council/data-security-and-access/">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/your-council/data-security-and-access/</a></p> <p>Or contact the Information Commissioners Office:  <a href="https://ico.org.uk/">https://ico.org.uk/</a></p>
Insurance Claims Against the Council	<p>Complaints in relation to the outcome of an insurance claim against the Council can be taken to the CAB (<a href="http://www.citizenadvice.org.uk">www.citizenadvice.org.uk</a>) for advice as to how to take further or to a private solicitor to make a claim at the Small Claims Courts.</p>
Freedom of Information (FOI) or Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests	<p>The FOI and EIR give individuals the right to access information held by the Council and the Council has a duty to respond in 20 working days.</p> <p>To find out what information is available on our website please refer:</p> <p>The Council's Publication Scheme:  <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/media/3825/publication-scheme-2020.pdf">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/media/3825/publication-scheme-2020.pdf</a></p> <p>Open Data page: <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/your-council/data-security-and-access/open-data/">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/your-council/data-security-and-access/open-data/</a></p>

## BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE REQUESTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

Area of Complaint	How to Complain
	<p>If the information you require is not available through these means please send your request to <a href="mailto:FOI@blaby.gov.uk">FOI@blaby.gov.uk</a> or Information Governance Team, Council Offices, Desford Road, Narborough, Leicestershire, LE19 2EP</p>
Data Subject Access Requests	<p>The Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations regulates the processing of information, relating to individuals including the obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information.</p> <p>The Act provides individuals the right to access the personal information the Council holds about them. Further information, on individual rights can be found at: <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/your-council/data-security-and-access/personal-information-and-your-rights/">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/your-council/data-security-and-access/personal-information-and-your-rights/</a></p> <p>If you wish to make a data subject request please send a request by email to: <a href="mailto:GDPR@blaby.gov.uk">GDPR@blaby.gov.uk</a> or by writing to: Information Governance Team, Council Offices, Desford Road, Narborough, Leicestershire, LE19 2EP</p>
Fraud	<p>Complaints relating to fraud will be dealt with under the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, available on our website.</p> <p>Concerns can be sent to <a href="mailto:fraud@blaby.gov.uk">fraud@blaby.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Matters relating to Housing Benefit, please visit: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/national-benefit-fraud-hotline">www.gov.uk/national-benefit-fraud-hotline</a></p>
Services provided by Leicestershire County Council	<p>The following services are provided by Leicestershire County Council not Blaby District Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highways, traffic and on-street parking</li> <li>• Schools and Education</li> <li>• Social Care, Adult's and Children's Social Services</li> <li>• Street Lighting</li> <li>• Maintenance of highway &amp; grass verges and footpaths</li> </ul> <p>You can visit the Leicestershire County Council Website to find out more about their complaints procedure and to make a complaint: <a href="https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/contact-us/complaints-and-comments">https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/contact-us/complaints-and-comments</a></p>

## BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE REQUESTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

Area of Complaint	How to Complain
Services provided by Local Parish or Town Councils	<p>The following services are provided by the relevant parish or town council not Blaby District Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allotments</li> <li>• Cemeteries</li> <li>• Community Halls</li> <li>• Local Recreation Areas</li> </ul>
Public Sewers and Shared Drainage matters	<p>These issues are dealt with by Severn Trent Water. Visit their contact page at:  <a href="https://www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/contact-us/">https://www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/contact-us/</a></p>
Parking Appeals	<p>All PCN complaints, appeals and payments are dealt with by the Notice Processing Unit (NPU) based at County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester. All queries about being issued a PCN should be directed to the NPU by following The Appeals Procedure which can be found in the reverse of the PCN.</p> <p>Further information can be found on the parking matters website or using the following contact details:</p> <p>Telephone: 0116 305 7953            Email: <a href="mailto:parkingmatters@leics.gov.uk">parkingmatters@leics.gov.uk</a>            Post: LCC Notice Processing Centre, P O Box 9983, Leicester, LE3 7DD</p>
Council Tax Appeals	<p>Council Tax Appeals should be made in writing to the Council. For more information see:  <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/council-tax/your-council-tax/appeals/">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/council-tax/your-council-tax/appeals/</a></p>
Housing Register Banding Appeals	<p>Statutory appeals against decisions relating to the Housing Register Banding must be sent directly to the Councils Housing Services team. Details of how to do this can be found at our <a href="#">Applying for the Housing Register</a> webpage.</p>
Benefit Appeals	<p>Benefit Appeals should be made in writing to the Benefits team within one month of a decision. For more information see:  <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/benefits-payments-and-claims/appeals/">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/benefits-payments-and-claims/appeals/</a></p>
Planning Appeals	<p>Applicants can make an appeal against a planning application decision by contacting the planning inspectorate.</p> <p>See: <a href="https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/">https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/</a></p>

## BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE REQUESTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

Area of Complaint	How to Complain
Issues that are the subject of civil proceedings, police investigation or disciplinary proceedings	All legal options/investigation should be concluded before any investigation through the Corporate Complaints Procedure can be started. Complaints investigations will be suspended if legal action starts during the investigation process.
Matters dealt with under the Council's employment procedures e.g. Complaints by staff or former staff	Complaints in relation to employment procedures should be referred to HR by emailing: <a href="mailto:HR@blaby.gov.uk">HR@blaby.gov.uk</a>
Complaints about the Chief Executive or Directors	Formal complaints about the Chief Executive will be referred to the council's Monitoring Officer for investigation.  Formals complaints about Directors will be referred to the Chief Executive for investigation.
Complaints about Social Housing	Blaby District Council do not own any housing stock. For complaints about housing please contact the relevant housing association or landlord.
The First Request for a Service	Requests for the following will not be dealt with under the complaint's policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abandoned vehicles <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/environmental-issue/waste-and-environment/abandoned-vehicles/">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/environmental-issue/waste-and-environment/abandoned-vehicles/</a></li> <li>• Bonfires</li> <li>• Noise problems</li> <li>• Flyposting</li> <li>• Graffiti</li> <li>• Litter Removal</li> <li>• Fly-tipping</li> <li>• Damaged Bus Shelters</li> <li>• Damaged Street Name Plate</li> </ul> <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/environmental-issue/reporting/">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/environmental-issue/reporting/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti Social Behaviour <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/environmental-issue/vandalism-and-behaviour/anti-social-behaviour/">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/environmental-issue/vandalism-and-behaviour/anti-social-behaviour/</a></li> <li>• Missed Waste Collection <a href="https://www.blaby.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/household-waste/report-missed-collection/">https://www.blaby.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/household-waste/report-missed-collection/</a></li> </ul>

## BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE REQUESTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

<b>Area of Complaint</b>	<b>How to Complain</b>
Complaints about the Leisure Centres	Enderby Leisure Centre and Huncote Leisure Centre are managed on our behalf by our contracted partner.  Complaints should be sent directly to the Centres in the first instance.