

UNHAPPY WITH OUR SERVICE? HOW TO COMPLAIN TO THE COUNCIL

Why you would complain:

You should complain:

- ✓ If you are unhappy about how your enquiry was dealt with
- ✓ If you are unhappy with how an officer has treated you
- ✓ If you are unhappy with our standard of service

How to complain:

- ✓ You can write to us. This is the preferred method as it means that you can include as much detail as you feel is necessary.
- ✓ You can make a complaint to South Cambs District Council by filling in the online Complaints and Compliments form, via our website.
http://www.scambs.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/Consultation/complaints_compliments.htm
- ✓ Alternatively you can fill in the same form in our Reception.
- ✓ Via the telephone (although it is easier to record information more accurately if your complaint is in writing).

What happens when you complain?

- ✓ We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days.
- ✓ Your complaint will be passed to the relevant Corporate Manager. You will be sent a written reply within 10 working days.
- ✓ If your complaint needs further investigation and will not be completed within 10 working days, then you will receive a letter informing you of the progress.
- ✓ You will receive an apology if we have made a mistake.
- ✓ If we were at fault, you will be told what measures are being taken to put things right.

The different stages of the complaints process:

Stage One

We hope to resolve your initial query/request for service at the first stage. The Corporate Manager, from whichever Service Area you require, will handle the enquiry/request and work hard to resolve the issue promptly. Unfortunately, there are some things that we cannot change if we are legally restricted, or because they involve other organisations. In these cases, we will explain the situation to you and give you an alternative point of contact.

Stage Two

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of your complaint then you can request that the complaint be passed to either our Chief Executive or our Executive Director at the council. In this case, you will receive a response within 20 days.

Stage Three

If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome then you can complain directly to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Local Government Ombudsman investigates complaints made regarding the injustice that arises after poor administration by local authorities. The Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted on 0207 217 4620 or you can visit www.lgo.org.uk.

Independent Advice

To get free independent advice or to find your local Citizens Advice Bureau see www.adviceguide.org.uk/ or look in your phonebook under 'C'. Alternatively you can contact the Cambridge Law Centre by calling (01223) 712222 for the Cambridge office, or (01480) 356778 for the Huntingdon office. Alternatively you can visit www.afl.org.uk.