

## HBC Complaint Handling Procedure

### Overview

All complaints need to be logged and you will usually receive notification of a complaint via email from Customer Services. Please review the complaint as soon as possible as sometimes the customer selects the wrong department, and the complaint will need to be reallocated. Doing so quickly allows the correct department to deal with the complaint within the 10-day SLA.

If a complaint needs redirecting, please email [Customer.ServicesE-Mail@havant.gov.uk](mailto:Customer.ServicesE-Mail@havant.gov.uk), with details of who should deal with the complaint. **It is vital that you take ownership** of finding the correct department, do not just send it back. If the complaint does not relate to Council services, you should respond to the customer accordingly and signpost them to the correct authority.

If a complaint comes to you direct, please ensure the details are sent to Customer Services to log them. Remember, a complaint does not need to be in writing to be dealt with as a formal complaint.

Complaints submitted via Customer Services are automatically sent an acknowledgement.

### Stage One Complaints

Using the investigation plan below can help you work through the complaint.

If you are at all unsure of anything, contact the customer for clarification.

Where possible, try to achieve an early resolution by phoning or visiting the complainant.

Ensure all points raised and questions asked are answered fully.

Complaints should be resolved within 10 working days. If for any reason this is not possible contact the complainant with an update and an anticipated response date.

Be realistic when setting customer expectations, do not promise something that you are not sure can be delivered.

Make sure that any follow up action is taken as promised.

When responding to the customer advise them that if they are not happy with the response to their complaint, they can request that it be escalated to stage 2 and provide details of your Executive Head of Service.

Send a copy of the response / details of the outcome to Customer Services and confirm whether the complaint was justified or unjustified.

A complaint is justified if the council is at fault such as we have failing to deal with an enquiry in a timely manner, unreasonable delays in delivering a service or systems

being unavailable meaning the customer is unable to access our services. Examples of when a complaint is unjustified are where we have followed the proper process and procedures, but the customer is not happy with the outcome or the customer is complaining about a third party not the council, such as a neighbour's fence being too high. If a customer is reporting that their bin has been missed for the first time and they just want it collected this can be changed to a service failure rather than a complaint.

## **Stage Two Complaints**

If the customer is not happy with the response to the stage one complaint, they can escalate this to a stage two complaint, which should be dealt with by the Executive Head of Service.

The process for investigating a stage two complaint is the same as stage one, but this time you are reviewing how the original complaint was dealt with.

Using the investigation plan below can help you work through the complaint.

If you are at all unsure of anything, contact the customer for clarification.

Where possible, try to achieve an early resolution by phoning or visiting the complainant.

Ensure all points raised and questions asked are answered fully.

Complaints should be resolved within 15 working days. If for any reason this is not possible contact the complainant with an update and an anticipated response date.

Be realistic when setting customer expectations, do not promise something that you are not sure can be delivered.

Make sure that any follow up action is taken as promised.

Send a copy of the response / details of the outcome to Customer Services and confirm whether the complaint was justified or unjustified.

For a stage two complaint to be justified it must meet one of the following points:

- All questions/points were not answered in original response
- All relevant facts were not investigated in Stage 1 complaint
- Agreed follow up action was not completed
- Customer has provided new evidence to support the complaint

When responding to the customer advise them that if they are not happy with the response to their complaint, they can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman <http://www.lgo.org.uk/>

Send a copy of the response / details of the outcome to Customer Services and confirm whether the complaint was justified or unjustified.

**Stage 1 Complaint Investigation Plan**

Customer Name:	Contact Details	Complaint Ref:
1. Summarise Complaint		
2. What does the customer want us to do to resolve the complaint		

**Stage 1 Complaint Investigation Plan**

3. What do you need to do to investigate the complaint?		
List what the customer says has gone wrong	What do you need to find out to establish what, if anything, went wrong	Where / who will the information be obtained from?
4. What is the outcome / resolution?		

**Stage 2 Complaint Investigation Plan**

Customer Name:	Contact Details	Complaint Ref:
1. Summarise Complaint		
2. What does the customer want us to do to resolve the complaint		

**Stage 2 Complaint Investigation Plan**

3. Review the investigation into the stage 1 complaint?		
Were all points / questions raised full investigated and answered?	Were all agreed follow up actions completed?	Has the customer provided new evidence to support the complaint?
4. What is the outcome / resolution?		