Cotswold District Council Housing Landlord Services Complaints Policy and Procedure – October 2026

We want to hear from you

The Council is committed to providing positive housing services and deliver good customer care. To do this we need to know what is working well and what we need to do to improve. If you have not contacted us before to tell us about the issue(s), please do this first.

For example, if you have not reported a repair to us, or need to tell us about a problem in your property, please contact us and allow us to try and put things right. However, if you have previously contacted us and are not happy with the outcome then you may wish to make a formal complaint.

This policy and summary information will be published on our website.

Feedback

Our team wants to provide a good service. We are committed to improving our services to meet our customer's needs. If we do something well it is great to have your feedback so that we know that we are on track and working to your expectations. It is also helpful for staff to know that their efforts are appreciated. We share compliments with our staff and contractors. If you receive a poor service please tell us so that we can put it right. It also helps us learn from it to improve our services for our tenants.

Contact us by :

- Using a form on our website https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/about-the-council/having-your-say/comments-and-complaints/
- By e-mail to customer.feedback@cotswold.gov.uk
- By phone to 01285 623000
- In writing to Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX

Request for Service and Complaints

Sometimes tenants contact us to tell us that something has gone wrong and they need us to put it right (for example a missed appointment or returning to do a repair). These are service requests and we will act promptly to deal with them.

Generally the following are not dealt with as complaints:

- An initial or follow up request for service
- An information request
- An insurance claim or a matter which is subject to legal proceedings

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service actions or lack of action by the Council, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.

Our complaints procedure reflects the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. We will acknowledge a complaint when a resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request. When the action or lack of action has resulted in service failure a complaint arises. This includes:

- Services delivered directly by the Council or its contractor
- The standard or quality of the service
- Failure to follow policy or procedure
- The behaviour of staff or contractors

We will act fairly when investigating a complaint. Investigating officers will seek to carefully consider all of the available information, act independently with an open mind and keep the matter confidential.

We will use information from complaints to improve our services and we will consider trends to inform changes which may be required to our systems of work.

We will follow our published procedure to endeavour to resolve a complaint. We recognise that effective complaint handling should be a customer friendly process that enables residents to be heard, listened to and understood. The starting point for this is a mutual understanding of what constitutes a complaint.

A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. We recognise the difference between a service request, survey feedback and a complaint and take appropriate steps to resolve the issue for residents as early as possible. We classify each complaint we receive under one of the two stages of complaint:

Stage 1 Formal Complaint Investigation

A complaint will be investigated by an officer that has not previously been involved in the case.

We will note and acknowledge the complaint in five working days. We will say who is dealing with the complaint and keep you informed. We will provide the expected response date.

Our aim is to investigate and make a decision within 10 working days from receipt of complaint. If this is not possible an explanation will be provided and an alternative date not longer than 20 working days.

Our intention will be to apologise, explain what happened and make it right. We will act quickly and keep you up to date.

The Asset Manager will lead on complaint resolution and response. They are assisted by the Business Manager for Assets and Council Priorities. One of these Managers will investigate the complaint and respond or appoint an officer of appropriate seniority to do so. The process will be overseen and recorded by the Customer Complaints Team.

If we need to seek further information from you in order to fully understand your complaint we will contact you.

Stage 2 Review of Decision

If a complainant is not satisfied with the explanation and resolution of their complaint they can ask for the matter to be reviewed. Residents are not required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration however we will endeavour to find out why you are not happy with our response.

Our aim is to make a decision within 20 working days from the request to escalate the complaint. If this is not possible an explanation will be provided and an alternative date not longer than a further 10 working days will be proposed. We will send an acknowledgement and provide the expected response date.

The Business Manager for Business Continuity and Risk or other nominated senior officer will investigate the complaint and respond or appoint an officer of appropriate seniority to do so. The process will be overseen and recorded by the Customer Complaints Team. We will keep you informed during the investigation.

Response

A response to a complaint will address all the points raised by the complainant and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, service standard, law and good practice where appropriate.

In our communications we will clearly state the stage at which the complaint is being dealt with, the outcome of the complaint, the reasons for any decisions made, details of any remedy offered, outstanding actions and information about how to escalate the matter if dissatisfied.

Our intention will be to apologise, explain what happened and make it right. We will act quickly and keep you up to date.

At any stage we will confirm in writing at the completion of our response to each complaint made;

- The complaint stage.
- The complaint definition.
- The decision on the complaint.
- The reasons for any decision made.
- The details of any remedy offered to put things right.
- Details of any outstanding actions.
- If a Stage One response, details of how to escalate the matter to Stage Two if the resident is not satisfied.
- If a Stage Two response, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied

Remedy

When responding to a complaint we will act to put in place remedial action. This will be decided on a case by case basis and careful consideration will be given to what is fair in the

circumstances. Where appropriate we will look beyond a particular case and seek to improve our systems of work, procedures or policies to ensure it does not happen again.

Apology

Sometimes the only resolution required to a complaint is an apology. If we apologise we will also acknowledge the service failure, accept responsibility, give an explanation for the service failure and express regret for the failure.

Specific Action

The complaint handler will consider whether there is any specific action required to rectify the complaint. This can include reconsidering or changing a decision.

Financial Compensation

Any decision to make an award of financial compensation will be based on what is decided is fair given the circumstances of the case. The amount of compensation paid will consider actual financial loss sustained as a direct result of the service failure and avoidable inconvenience, distress, detriment or unfair impact as a direct result of the service failure.

Policies and systems of work

Sometimes the feedback we receive may result in a change to a system of work, policy, procedure or practice.

Equalities

We recognise that sometimes this policy will have to be adapted to meet a tenant's particular circumstances. We will make reasonable adjustments as required by the Equalities Act 2010. We will ensure that people with disabilities are not disadvantaged by this policy.

Examples are to provide documents and information in a variety of formats and if needed provide documents in larger print. Where it may be difficult for an individual to make a complaint formally in writing we will accept complaints verbally, in a meeting or from a third party that can act in the best interests of the complainant.

Housing Ombudsman

We will endeavour to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction. If you decide that we are not doing so you can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage to seek advice and assistance.

The Ombudsman will investigate the complaint and make recommendations for the Council to resolve it – this may include a compensation payment.

Full details of the Housing Ombudsman service can be found on their website - www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Their e-mail is info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Their telephone number is 0300 111 3000 Address – PO Box 152 Liverpool L33 7W

Learning from Complaints

We will use information from complaints to consider our systems of work and how we behave towards our customers. In doing so we will encourage teams to use them to understand how our service is received.