

SOUTH WEST COUNCILS PUBLIC COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. What you can expect from us

- 1.1 South West Councils is committed to providing an efficient and good quality service. Our aim is to act promptly and give helpful, courteous and informative help and advice. If we fail to provide you with the level of service we aim to deliver please let us know. We are a very small organisation so we will strive to respond as set out below but resource constraints may make this impossible on occasions.
- 1.2 Please act promptly: either speak to the member of staff directly, or put your complaint in writing. We hope that most concerns can be addressed by discussing them with the person involved.
- 1.3 If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, please use our formal complaints procedure, which is explained below.

2. Types of Complaint

- 2.1 What do we mean by a complaint? Examples of complaints might include:
 - Dissatisfaction about the way in which we have handled an enquiry
 - We have failed to do something we should have
 - Our work has been of poor quality
 - You are unhappy with the way in which we have used your personal data
- 2.2 A complaint is not
 - A request for information
 - A query or comment about Government policy

3. How to Make a Complaint

- 3.1 Informal discussion direct with the member of staff should resolve most issues. However, if you are not satisfied with the initial response, you can make a formal complaint by contacting the Business Manager. Please write to:

Business Manager
Dennett House
11 Middle Street
Taunton
TA1 1SH

4. What happens next?

4.1 The person receiving your complaint will:

- treat the complaint sensitively
- investigate thoroughly
- respond to you promptly

5. Our Promise to You

5.1 All complaints will be acknowledged within **3 working days**
A full reply will be sent normally within **15 working days**.
Where the complaint is complex and we need more time to investigate we will send you an interim reply within **5 working days** and give you a date when you can expect a full reply and from whom.

6. Still not satisfied?

6.1 If you are unhappy with the response we have given you may ask for a review of your complaint by a representative of the Chief Executive. Your complaint will be looked at afresh and a full response sent to you within **20 working days**.

7. Complaints we are unable to handle

7.1 We are unable to handle some complaints because they are outside our jurisdiction. If this is the case, we will let you know to whom your complaint should be addressed. These might include complaints about: -

National Government policy
Political parties
Individual local authorities etc

8. Abusive callers

8.1 We strive to provide a high quality service to all who contact us. In return our staff have the right to be treated with courtesy and politeness. If correspondence (this includes electronic mail) is abusive, malicious or constitutes a personal attack, we reserve the right to limit our response to an acknowledgement. If any of our staff are subjected to abusive behaviour they have been given permission to offer one "warning" and then either walk away or in the case of a phone call, put the phone down. The abusive behaviour will be recorded and the Business Manager or Head of Personnel will be informed.