

How to comment or complain about a council service

This leaflet is available in large print, in Braille and on audiotape.
We also have a translation and interpreting service.



কিভাবে অভিযোগ করতে হয়

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Πως να παραπονεθείτε

如何投訴

Sida loo dacwoodo

Cómo hacer un reclamo

Comment vous plaindre





We define a complaint as: ‘An expression of dissatisfaction about our action, lack of action, or standard of service, whether justified or not.’

At Islington Council we want to give you high-quality services. But there may be times when you think we do not get it right.

When this happens we want to hear about it so we can try and sort out the problem **without** you having to make a complaint. We will try to sort out your concerns as soon as they arise, but sometimes you may want to make a complaint. Complaints about our services are important and we treat them very seriously.

You have the right to complain, and we can learn valuable lessons from what you tell us. Making a complaint won't affect your right to receive a high-quality service.



We aim to:

- give you clear information on how to complain
- sort out your complaint as quickly as possible
- apologise when things have gone wrong, *and*
- make sure we put any problems **right**.

What should I do if I'm not satisfied with the service I have received from the council?

If you are unhappy about a particular service or want to make a suggestion, you should raise it first with the relevant local office. They will do their best to try and sort out the problem as soon

as they can. Sometimes it may not be possible to solve problems immediately but we will let you know how long we expect it to take.

If you don't know who is the right person to contact, please ask a member of staff or a departmental complaints officer. There is a full list of departmental complaints officers on page 8 and they should be able to help.

What if this does not sort out the problem?

If you are not happy with the response you get, you can make a complaint.

This leaflet explains our complaints procedure. It helps you find the department responsible for the service you are complaining about and tells you how to complain.

What can I complain about?

You can make a complaint if you think we or one of our contractors has:

- not delivered a service within the time we promised
- not done something we should have done
- delivered a service below standard
- failed to follow the correct procedure or policy, or
- behaved in an unsatisfactory or unprofessional way.

When you first ask for a service, or report a problem such as a street light not working or a repair needing to be done, this is not a complaint. But if you are not satisfied with our response to your request, you can make a complaint.

How do I complain?

You can complain in any of the following ways.

- You can phone the manager of the service area you are complaining about. Please make it clear you want to make a complaint.
- You can visit the service area you are complaining about. (It may be best to phone first and make an appointment.)
- Fill in the form at the end of this leaflet.
- You can send or fax a letter to the relevant manager or departmental complaints officer.
- Or, you can send an e-mail.
Our website is www.islington.gov.uk and you will find an on-line complaints form under the 'Other most popular' section. You can get access to the internet, free of charge, at your local library.

Do you deal with all complaints under this complaints procedure?

No, there are different legal appeals procedures and policies for some council services. These include:

- appeals over parking enforcement
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit appeals
- planning application appeals
- homelessness decisions and offers of housing
- school admissions and exclusions, and
- special education needs assessments.

If your complaint is covered by one of these areas, we will let you know what to do next.

There is also a separate statutory (legal) complaints procedure for **social services** which, although similar to our general complaints procedure, is governed by different timescales. They can help anyone who wants to make a complaint. For more information, phone the social services complaints office on **020 7527 8046**.

How do you deal with complaints about schools?

By law, all schools must have a complaints procedure. For more advice, contact the head teacher or get advice from CEA@Islington on **020 7527 5786**.

Finally, this procedure does **not** deal with:

- issues which are, or are likely to become, a legal matter, or issues that have been a legal matter in the past
- insurance claims against us, and
- problems that you knew about more than a year ago but have only just told us about. In exceptional circumstances, we may think it is reasonable to look into it despite the delay.

To investigate your complaint, we may need to give details of it to other council officers or contractors.

We will respect your right to confidentiality and will only give details of your complaint to people outside the council if we have your permission or have to do so by law.

Our complaints procedure has three stages.

You should generally follow each stage to get the most out of the process.

Stage 1

The first stage is to complain to the local service manager of the department concerned. If you are not sure who to talk to, look at pages 7 and 8 or ask at any council office.

The department will acknowledge your complaint within three working days of receiving it. The manager will normally send you a full written reply within 10 working days of receiving your complaint.

If you need an interpreter or sign-language interpreter, we can arrange this for you – we usually need five working days to arrange this. This may delay our work on your complaint.

If I am not satisfied with the manager's investigation, what can I do next?

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the manager's investigation, you can contact the department's complaints officer. A list of complaints officers is on page 8 of this leaflet. Please say clearly why you are still not satisfied. The complaints officer will send you an acknowledgement within three working days.

The complaints officer will consider whether we should look at your complaint again. If we feel your complaint has already been properly dealt with, we will tell you.

If we investigate your complaint again, we will tell you who will deal with it. It will be someone who has not dealt with your complaint before. They will normally send you a full written reply within 10 working days. In some cases where complaints are complicated, we may need longer than 10 working days. We will tell you if this is the case.

What happens if I am still not satisfied with the investigation?

Stage 3

If you believe we have not dealt with your complaint properly at stage 2, you can appeal to the **Chief Executive's Central Complaints Unit, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD. Phone 020 7527 3007.**

E-mail: central.complaints@islington.gov.uk

The Central Complaints Unit will consider whether there are reasons to investigate further.

We will acknowledge your letter within three working days and we will normally send you a written reply within 25 working days. This is the final stage of our complaints procedure.

If I still feel my complaint has not been properly dealt with, what can I do?

The Local Government Ombudsman

You may contact the Local Government Ombudsman. This is an independent national service which investigates complaints against councils.

You can complain directly to the Ombudsman. He will usually refer your complaint back to us if it has not been through all the stages of our complaints procedure. His address is:

The Local Government Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP. Phone 020 7217 4620.

Can I get help from my councillor or MP?

Yes, your local councillor may be able to help you make a complaint and you can get their name and address from a local library, housing office or our website. You can write to them at **The Members' Room, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD**. For information about when you can see your councillor, or find out their name, phone **020 7527 3114**.

To contact your MP write to them at **House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Phone 020 7219 3000**.

Other help with making a complaint. You may want a friend or someone from the council or a voluntary organisation to help you fill in the complaints form attached to this leaflet. We have included a list of advice agencies in this leaflet. You can also ask for help at any council office.

For those who are blind, deaf, hard of hearing, partially sighted or deaf-blind, please contact:

Sensory Disability Team, 166 Upper Street, N1 1XU.
Phone: 020 7527 3394 Minicom: 020 7527 3282.

Sign-language interpreting. We have a full-time sign-language interpreter who may be able to come with you to an appointment. Phone or minicom: 020 7527 3396.

Braille, large print or audio tape. Please contact the Central Complaints Unit if you would like a copy of this leaflet in Braille, in large print or on audio tape.

Department and services provided

Benefits

Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit

Contact Islington

Corporate contact and service centres, cashiers and insurance services

Environment and Regeneration

Abandoned vehicles, pest-control, parking (on street), parks, pavements and roads, planning, noise, refuse collection, street cleaning, street lighting, trading standards and leisure centres

Finance and Property Services

Business properties, business rates and Council Tax

Homes for Islington

Tenancy management, estate parking, leasehold service charges, neighbour problems, rent arrears, repairs, right-to-buy and tenant transfers

Housing and Performance

Homelessness, housing advice and allocations, temporary accommodation, strategy and performance, housing partners and supporting people

Law and Public Services

Conveyancing (right-to-buy), electoral registration and registrar services

Education

Early years, libraries, lifelong learning, play and youth, regeneration projects and student support

Schools

Schools deal directly with complaints except those relating to the curriculum which are dealt with by CEA@Islington. CEA@Islington has its own complaints procedure for the services it provides.

Social Services

Adoption and fostering, asylum seekers, child protection, children and family services, home care, meals in the home, occupational therapy and residential homes

Departmental Complaints Officers

Benefits Complaints Officer

Benefits Service, 4-10 North Road, N7 9EY **Phone:** 020 7527 3645
Fax: 020 7527 4976 **E-mail:** benefits.complaints@islington.gov.uk

Contact Islington Complaints Officer

222 Upper Street, N1 1XR **Phone:** 020 7527 2000
Fax: 020 7527 5001 **E-mail:** contact@islington.gov.uk

Environment Complaints Officer

Room 418, PO Box 3333, 222 Upper Street, N1 1YA
Phone: 020 7527 2609 **Fax:** 020 7527 2731
E-mail: environment.complaints@islington.gov.uk

Finance Complaints Officer

Room G17, 222 Upper Street, N1 1XR **Phone:** 020 7527 2707
Fax: 020 7527 2168 **E-mail:** finance.complaints@islington.gov.uk

Homes for Islington Complaints Officer

First Floor, Highbury House, Highbury Crescent, N5 1RN
Phone: 020 7527 8633 **Fax:** 020 7527 4201
E-mail: complaints@homesforislington.org.uk

Housing and Performance Appeals and Complaints Officer

The Housing Aid Centre, 38 Devonia Road, N1 8UY
Phone: 020 7527 4340 **Fax:** 020 7527 6332
E-mail: housingandperformance.complaints@islington.gov.uk

Legal Complaints Officer

Room 209, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD **Phone:** 020 7527 3174
Fax: 020 7527 3267 **E-mail:** lbs.complaints@islington.gov.uk

Regeneration & Education Complaints Officer

Laycock Building, Laycock Street, N1 1TH **Phone:** 020 7527 5909
Fax: 020 7527 5668 **E-mail:** education@islington.gov.uk

CEA@Islington Complaints Officer

Room S10, Laycock Street, N1 1TH **Phone:** 020 7527 5786
Fax: 020 7527 5853 **E-mail:** mervin.ellis.cea@islington.gov.uk

Social Services Complaints Officer

338-346 Goswell Road, London, EC1V 7LQ
Phone: 020 7527 8046 **Fax:** 020 7527 8367
E-mail: socialservices.complaints@islington.gov.uk

Homes for Islington area housing offices

The area housing offices are directly responsible for caretaking, managing estates, rent recovery, and estate cleaning.

Central Street Area Housing Office

85 Central Street, EC1V 8DT
Phone: 020 7527 6280

Holland Walk Area Housing Office

85-88 Holland Walk, N19 3XS
Phone: 020 7527 7480

Upper Street Area Housing Office

Northway House,
257 Upper Street, N1 1RU
Phone: 020 7527 5300

Islington Repair Line: You should report repairs for properties managed by the above offices to the 24-hour repairs call centre on: **0800 694 3344**. This call is free.

Report repairs for Lyon Street and Partners properties directly to the phone numbers below.

Lyon Street Area Housing Office

(Hyde Northside)
1 Lyon Street, N1 1DQ
Phone: 020 7527 6881

Partners for Improvement (PFI 1)

4-6 Colebrooke Place, N1 8HZ
Freephone: 0800 587 3595

Advice agencies in the borough

Please phone these agencies first to find out what services are available.

Islington Citizens Advice Bureau

86 Durham Road, N7 7DU
Phone: 0870 7510 925

Islington Age Concern

6-9 Manor Gardens, N7 6LA
Phone: 020 7281 6018

Disability Action in Islington

91 Upper Street, N1 0NP
Phone: 020 7226 0137
Minicom: 020 7359 1891
E-mail: info@daii.org

Islington People's Rights

2 St Paul's Road, N1 2QN
Phone: 020 7359 2010

Islington Law Centre

161 Hornsey Road, N7 6DU
Phone: 020 7607 2461

Imece Turkish Education Group

2 Newington Green, N1 4RX
Phone: 020 7226 8647

Imece Turkish Women's Group

2 Newington Green, N1 4RX
Phone: 020 7354 1359

'Arachne'

Greek-Cypriot Women's Group

2nd Floor, 67-83 Seven Sisters Road,
N7 6UB. Phone: 020 7263 6261
Email: arachnegk@ukonline.co.uk

Islington Chinese Association

33 Giesbach Road, N19 3DR
Phone: 020 7263 5986

Islington Somali Community

66 Halliford Street, N1 3HF
Phone: 020 7354 9895

7 Have you contacted anybody in the council about your complaint?

Yes No If **'Yes'**, what was their name and job title (if you know it)?

On what date did you complain?

8 What response did you get?

9 Was your complaint in writing? Yes No

If **'Yes'**, please send us copies of the complaint and our reply with this form.

10 Why are you not satisfied with our response?

11 What do you think we should do to put things right?

12 Your signature

Date: / /

Listening to Islington

Islington Council are committed to listening to the views of all of our residents. In order to make sure that everyone who is eligible for our services can access them, we would like to ask you a few questions about yourself. The answers you give will be used for monitoring purposes only, and will not be used as part of the investigation into your complaint.

(Please tick the appropriate box.)

Age range:

16 to 19 20 to 29 30 to 39 40 to 49 50 to 59 60 to 65 and over

Gender:

Male Female

Sexuality:

Bisexual Heterosexual Gay Lesbian Prefer not to say

Ethnicity:

Asian or Asian British:

Bangladeshi
Indian
Pakistani
Other Asian background (please state)

Mixed:

White and Asian
White and Black African
White and Black Caribbean
Other Mixed background (please state)

Chinese or other Ethnic Group:

Chinese
Filipino
Vietnamese
Other Ethnic Group (please state)

Black or Black British:

Caribbean
African:
Eritrean
Ghanaian
Nigerian
Somali
Other African background (please state)

Other Black background (please state)

White:

British
Greek/Greek Cypriot
Irish
Kurdish
Turkish/Turkish Cypriot
Other White background (please state)

Religion or Belief:

Please state. _____

Disability:

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Recent changes to the law mean that individuals with long term illnesses, such as multiple sclerosis, HIV or cancer, have legal protection from the point of diagnosis, rather than when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled or to have an impairment or long-term limiting illness? Yes: No:

Do you consider yourself to:

Be deaf or have a hearing impairment
Be blind or have visual impairment
Have a physical impairment
Have a mental health impairment
Have a hidden impairment (such as cancer, HIV, Diabetes, etc)
Have a learning disability

If you want to make a complaint and English is not your first language, you can use the council's translation and interpreting service.
Phone 020 7527 8155

English

আপনি যদি কোন অভিযোগ পেশ করতে চান এবং ইংরেজী যদি আপনার প্রথম ভাষা না হয়, তাহলে আপনি কাউন্সিলের ট্রান্সলেশন অ্যান্ড ইন্টারপ্রিটিং সার্ভিসটি ব্যবহার করতে পারেন।
ফোন: 020 7527 8155

Bengali

Herhangi bir şikayette bulunmak istemeniz ve anadiliniz İngilizce değilse Belediyе'nin Çeviri ve Tercümanlık Servisi'ni kullanabilirsiniz.
Telefon: 020 7527 8155

Turkish

Αν θέλετε να κάνετε παράπονο και τα Αγγλικά δεν είναι η μητρική σας γλώσσα, μπορείτε να χρησιμοποιήσετε την Υπηρεσία Μεταφράσεων και Διερμηνείας του Δήμου.

Greek

Τηλεφωνήστε στο: 020 7527 8155

如果你想作出投訴而英語並非你的母語，你可以使用區政府的翻譯及傳譯服務。

Chinese

請致電：020 7527 8155

Haddii aad doonayso in aad sameeyso dacwad oo luqadaada kowaad aanay ahayn af Ingiriisi, waxaad isticmaali kartaa Adeegga Af-celinta iyo Turjumida ee Kownsalka. Tel: 020 7527 8155

Somali

Si necesita hacer un reclamo y el inglés no es su lengua materna, puede acudir al Servicio de Traducción e Interpretación (Translation and Interpreting Service) de la municipalidad.
Teléfono: 020 7527 8155

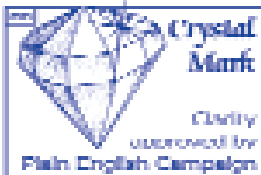
Spanish

Si vous désirez vous plaindre et que l'Anglais n'est pas votre langue natale, vous pouvez utiliser le Service de Traduction et d'Interprétation de la Mairie. Téléphone: 020 7527 8155

French

اگر آپ شکایت کرنا چاہتے ہیں اور انگریزی آپ کی بول چال کی زبان نہیں ہے تو آپ کونسل کی ٹرانسلیشن اینڈ انٹریپریٹنگ سروس استعمال کر سکتے ہیں۔ ٹیلی فون نمبر۔ 020 7527 8155

Urdu



NOVEMBER 2004