

# Housing Landlord Complaints Policy

Updated: May 2026

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## 1. Introduction

Cannock Chase Council is committed to delivering high-quality, accessible and timely services. We recognise that occasionally things may go wrong, and when they do, residents have a right to complain. This policy explains how complaints are defined, handled and resolved in line with the Complaint Handling Code of the Housing Ombudsman Service.

This policy applies to any comments, compliments or concerns raised in respect of the services provided by the Council as a social housing landlord, unless a separate statutory appeal process applies.

## 2. What is a Complaint?

A complaint can be defined as *"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 an individual or group of individuals"*.

Residents do not need to use the word "complaint" for it to be treated as one.

A complaint may be made:

- Directly by the resident
- By a representative or advocate with the resident's consent
- Via any other third party, such as a support worker, MP or local councillor

All complaints, whether raised by a resident, representative or third party, will be handled in line with this complaints policy, subject to section 4 - When a Complaint Will Not Be Considered.

Whenever dissatisfaction is expressed, residents must be offered the choice to make a complaint.

Examples include:

- if you are unhappy with a service we have provided or we have failed to provide that service
- if a member of our staff has been rude or unhelpful
- if we have not followed our own policies and procedures resulting in a negative outcome.

To make a complaint you can do this:

- Online by completing the [form](#)
- By email to [ceoformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:ceoformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk) or [housingformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:housingformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)
- By telephone on 01543 462621; or
- By writing to Complaints, Cannock Chase District Council, Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG.
- Directly to staff, who will pass on the complaint to the CEO or Housing Formal Enquiries.

### 3. Service Requests vs Complaints

A **Service Request** is a request for the Council to take action and put something right, or an initial request for service. For example, this could include, but is not limited to:

- making a repair request
- reporting anti-social behaviour
- asking for an update on a housing application
- requesting information or a clarification to a situation and/or policy or procedures

Service requests are not complaints, but they will be recorded and monitored.

If a resident expresses dissatisfaction with how a service request was handled, this becomes a **Complaint** (as defined above), even if the original service request work is ongoing.

Raising a complaint does not stop or delay the Council from continuing to address any urgent or outstanding service issues.

### 4. When a Complaint Will Not Be Considered

A complaint may not be accepted if:

- The issue occurred more than 12 months ago, or more than 12 months after you become aware of the incident, and the resident has no valid reason for the delay
- The matter has already been reviewed through this complaints policy

- It is a request for clarification of a situation and/ or policy or procedures or you disagree with a decision of the Council, which has been taken in accordance with our policies and procedures.
- It is an expression of dissatisfaction made through a survey or consultation response. The resident would subsequently be made aware of how to make a service request or submit a complaint if they wish.
- Legal proceedings have begun (e.g., Claim Form filed)
- Solely regarding an Insurance claim or issues that will be subject to an insurance claim, these would be referred to the Insurance team and dealt with separately under the [Corporate Complaints Procedure](#).
- There is a separate appeals process.
- The complaint relates to the Conduct of a Member(s) please use the following link - [Complaints - Council Members](#).
- The Council will not deal with anonymous complaints unless they raise serious issues about the conduct of an officer, member or the Council, such as criminal or unlawful behaviour.
- The complaint relates to 'Unreasonably Persistent and/or vexatious complaints and unreasonable behaviour' – see section 13 for more detail.

Each complaint would be considered on its own merits, however, if the Council decides not to accept a complaint, it will:

1. Provide a clear written explanation
2. Inform the resident of their right to challenge this decision with the Ombudsman

## 5. Time Limits

- Complaints should be made ideally within 1 month unless there is a good reason for the delay.
- Complaints will be accepted within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue or the incident occurring.
- The Council may apply discretion in appropriate circumstances to complaints outside these time limits.

## 6. Accessibility

The Council will make this policy available:

- Online
- In hard copy

- In accessible formats (e.g., large print, translated versions, audio)

Residents may request their preferred format at any time. Additional time may be required to provide some accessible formats, the resident would be informed.

## 7. Representation

Residents may at any stage:

- Appoint a representative to manage their complaint
- Be accompanied to any meeting
- Use advocates or support agencies

Where a representative requires access to personal data, written authority will be requested. A form of authority will be required to be completed and signed by the resident.

## 8. Publicising the Policy

The complaints policy will be:

- Published on the Council's website
- Provided on request
- Signposted through service areas, reception points, and written correspondence

## 9. The Complaints Process (Two Stages)

### Stage 1 – Investigation

In making a complaint it will be useful for you to give specific examples of what has happened and who was involved, dates that any incident took place, and relevant background information (such as letters or emails) and an understanding of what outcome you would like to achieve by making the complaint.

When a complaint is received, the Council will:

1. Acknowledge it within **5 working days**
2. In the acknowledgement define the complaint — by confirming:
  - The Council's understanding of the issues
  - The outcomes the resident seeks
  - Which elements the Council can and cannot address
3. Provide a full written response within **10 working days**

If additional time is required:

- No extension will exceed **10 additional working days** without good reason.
- If further extensions are required, the Council will explain the reasons and agree the new timescale with progress updates provided at suitable intervals.
- The resident will be informed of their right to contact the Ombudsman.

The Stage 1 response will be issued as soon as the answer is known, even if actions are still outstanding. Updates on actions will be provided to the resident until completion.

Stage 1 is completed by Team Leader, Assistant Manager or Service Manager Level.

## Stage 2 – Review

If the resident is dissatisfied, they may request an escalation of their complaint. Residents do not need to explain why they want to go to Stage 2, though the Council will make reasonable efforts to understand this during the investigation.

Stage 2 complaints will not normally be accepted more than 3 months after a Stage 1 response has been provided.

You can make a stage 2 complaint in the following ways:

- If you have already complained in writing at Stage 1 you can ask the person dealing with it to pass it to the central Complaints team
- You can use our formal complaints form, or email the details of your review request to [ceoformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:ceoformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk) or [housingformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:housingformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)
- You can send it as a letter by post or deliver it by hand addressed to Complaints, Cannock Chase District Council, Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG.

Stage 2 is completed by a Service Manager or Head of Service who was not involved in Stage 1, and senior to that at Stage 1.

Stage two is a review of how adequate the stage one response was, as well as any new and relevant information that we've not considered. It's not a more thorough, detailed investigation of your complaint.

The Council will:

1. Acknowledge it within **5 working days**
2. In the acknowledgement define the complaint — by confirming:
  - The Council's understanding of the issues
  - The outcomes the resident seeks
  - Which elements the Council can and cannot address

### 3. Provide a full written response within **20 working days**

If additional time is required:

- No extension will exceed **20 additional working days** without good reason.
- If further extensions are required, the reasons for and new timescales will be agreed and explained with progress updates provided at suitable intervals.
- Ombudsman contact details will be provided.

The Stage 2 response will be issued as soon as the answer is known, even if actions are still outstanding. Updates on actions will be provided until completion.

## 10. Additional Complaints Raised During Investigation

If new issues are raised whilst responding to the complaint:

- If related and the Stage 1 response has not yet been issued, they will be incorporated into the Stage 1 response.
- If unrelated or would unreasonably delay the response, they are logged as a new complaint.

## 11. After Stage 2

Stage 2 is the Council's final response, once complete, residents may contact the appropriate Ombudsman:

- **Housing Ombudsman** - for social housing landlord services
- **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman** – for other housing related local authority services, such as allocations, homelessness and housing advice.

Further details of what each Ombudsman is responsible for is available on the following links:

- [Housing Ombudsman](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/centre-for-learning/support-guides/which-ombudsman-for-social-housing-complaints)  
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/centre-for-learning/support-guides/which-ombudsman-for-social-housing-complaints
- [Local Government Ombudsman](http://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/housing/which-ombudsman-for-complaints-about-social-housing)  
www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/housing/which-ombudsman-for-complaints-about-social-housing

However, residents may contact the Ombudsman **at any point in the complaints process**, not only after Stage 2.

The Ombudsman is totally independent of the District Council and has a legal duty to investigate complaints. The Ombudsman will only usually investigate a matter once the Council's own complaints process has been exhausted.

There are some limits on what the Ombudsman can look at. For example, the Ombudsman may not consider your complaint if you have not been significantly personally affected by the issue you are raising, or if you have a right of appeal to a court or tribunal.

## 12. Monitoring & Learning

All complaints will be:

- Logged and monitored
- Analysed for learning
- Reported to senior leaders (quarterly and within the Housing Services annual complaints performance report)
- Used to improve service delivery

## 13. Unreasonably Persistent and/or vexatious complaints and unreasonable behaviour

Handling such complaints can place strain on time and resources and can be stressful for staff dealing with these complex and challenging issues. In order to counter this, we will decide how to manage direct communication with the customer if matters are repeatedly raised or widely escalated. We may decide to limit or cease further contact with customers if we consider they are behaving unreasonably by making persistent or vexatious complaints. We may also redirect email or other correspondence received to a single point of contact.

Unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants are those who, because of the nature or frequency of their contacts with an organisation, hinder the organisation's consideration of their, or other people's, complaints.

**The Council will not tolerate rude, offensive, abusive, threatening or intimidating behaviours towards its staff or Councillors and will act where appropriate to report such behaviours to the Police and may restrict or prohibit access to Council premises or staff where necessary to protect Council staff, Councillors or other people using Council premises.**

Further information is contained in the Unacceptable Actions by Complainants Policy, available under the [Corporate Complaints Procedure](#).

## 14. Contact

To find out more about the Complaints Policy, please contact:

Housing Services Team, Cannock Chase Council, Civic Centre, Beecroft Road,  
Cannock, Staffs, WS11 1BG

Telephone: 01543 462621

E-mail: [housingformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:housingformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk) or  
[serviceimprovements@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:serviceimprovements@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)