

Making a complaint, comment or compliment

Our commitment

Wandsworth Council aims to provide services of the highest standard at all times. When you are not satisfied with the service you have had, please let us know. We would also like to hear from you when you are pleased with the service you have received.

The 2009 Complaint Regulations require that Adult Social Services and the National Health Service (NHS) use a single approach when dealing with complaints for adults. If your complaint involves both the department and the NHS we will work together to give you a single response in most cases.

Complaints are important to us, because by listening to service users we can improve the services we provide.

Making comments

Making a complaint will not have an effect on any services you are receiving or may need in the future.

You don't have to have a complaint to make a comment about the services you receive. We welcome general feedback about our services; again, this helps us to measure how well we are doing and to consider what improvements can be made.

Who can complain?

Anyone who has dealings with us can complain. For example, you could be a service user, family member, unpaid carer or a service provider; if you are unsure you can contact our complaints team who will be happy to advise you.

You can make your own complaint or with the help of someone such as a relative, carer, friend or advocate. In such cases we may contact you to find out if you agree to the complaint being raised by someone else or an organisation on your behalf.

Complaints can also be made by representatives of people who are unable to make the complaint themselves because of:

- physical incapacity.
- lack of capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

In some cases we may have to get the permission from the person you are complaining on behalf of before we can progress a complaint.

Who should you complain to?

Complaints about services that are privately arranged

If your complaint is about an independent care provider with whom you have made a private arrangement to fund your own care, you will need to raise your complaint with them directly.

Complaints about services arranged by the council

If your complaint is about an independent service provider and your support is fully or partially funded by the council you should

raise your complaint with the provider first. If you do not feel able to resolve the problem with the provider yourself, please contact the complaints team who will be able to help you, the council can contact the provider on your behalf.

Complaints about council services

The time limit for making a complaint is 12 months from the date that you became aware of the problem. If you are unhappy about a service or the way you have been treated, it is best to raise this with the person concerned or their manager, or you can contact the complaints team for help and advice.

As soon as you let us know that you have a concern or complaint, we will contact you to agree the best way forward.

Whichever way you decide to make your complaint it will be acknowledged within three days. It will be taken seriously and all efforts taken to resolve it quickly and effectively.

How do you raise concerns, make a complaint or give compliments?

The quickest and most effective way is to talk directly to the people you normally deal with or to their manager. Speak to them as soon as you can to give your feedback, they will try to sort your concerns out quickly.

If you know the name of the person but not their telephone number please call our Access Team on (020) 8871 7707.

Contact the complaints team:

Email: **ssdcomplaints@wandsworth.gov.uk**

Phone: (Freephone) **0800 023 2011**

This will get you through to the complaints team.

Minicom: **(020) 8871 8485**

Fax: **(020) 8871 7447**

Post, you can write to the Complaints Manager, Adult Social Services at the following address:

**Adult Social Services Complaints Team
Freepost
Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
LONDON
SW18 2PU**

If you want to make a complaint about the South West London and St Georges Mental Health Trust

You can contact the complaints manager by:

Email:

complaintsmanager@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk

Phone: **(020) 8772 5520**

What happens when you make a formal complaint?

Early resolution (Quick Response)

Most concerns can be settled by talking to the member of staff or their manager about your complaint, hopefully, they will be able to deal with your concerns to your satisfaction.

If you tell them what it is that is worrying you they will try to find a solution **by the end of the next working day**, if possible. Do give them all the information you have as this will help them to respond more quickly to your concerns.

What happens if early resolution does not work?

If we are not able to resolve your complaint early, your concerns will then be recorded as:

- a formal complaint at the **local resolution** stage.
- An acknowledgement letter will be sent either in the post or via email, within three working days. It will tell you what we are going to do next. An officer will be appointed to investigate your complaint.

- Someone will contact you to discuss with you how your complaint will be investigated.
- Whilst the actual timescale to respond to your complaint will be agreed with you, the department aims to do so within 20 working days.
- If your complaint is more complex or it is agreed with you to appoint an independent person to investigate your complaint this may take more than 20 days. You will be consulted about this.

The department will:

- go through each part of your complaint to make sure we fully understand your concerns. We would usually do this by phone but we are able to meet with you.
- tell you how we will investigate your complaint and agree a timescale to send you a response.
- ask you what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint and tell you if we feel this is realistic.

- keep you informed about the progress of your complaint using the method you have chosen. e.g. letter, email.

Once the investigation has been completed you will receive a response telling you what was found and what will happen as a result.

Adult safeguarding enquiries or criminal investigations

In some rare circumstances a complaint might have to be put on hold whilst there is an adults safeguarding enquiry going on or a criminal investigation is taking place. In these situations each case will be considered individually and assessed to see whether it is appropriate to proceed with a complaint. If it is decided that the complaint needs to be put on hold you will be written to setting out the reason why and the complaints team will keep you updated.

What happens if you are not satisfied with our response?

Following the response sent to you at the local resolution stage it is your right to take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. However, the council is keen to resolve your complaint at an early stage.

Therefore, if you would prefer the council to have another look at your complaint, you can ask that it is reviewed by the assistant director responsible for the service you are complaining about. This is at your discretion, and you always retain the right to go to the Local Government Ombudsman. For further information please contact the complaints team for help and advice.

Other help

You can get in touch with your local councillor or Member of Parliament (MP). You can get lists of local councillors and Members of Parliament with their contact details from the council's website: **www.wandsworth.gov.uk** or from your local library.

Healthwatch Wandsworth

www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk

Healthwatch Wandsworth represents the patient's voice on other boards and meetings that commission, deliver and monitor health and social services. They can also help people by explaining their options when it comes to health and social care services and how to feed back or complain about their experience.

Care Quality Commission

www.cqc.org.uk

The Care Quality Commission's role is to make sure that hospitals, care homes, dental and general practices and other care services in England provide people with safe, effective and high-quality care.

What can you do if you are not satisfied with our final response?

If you remain dissatisfied you will be advised to ask the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to investigate your complaint.

They can investigate complaints that cannot be resolved locally.

You can write to the ombudsman at:

**The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry CV4 0EH**

or contact the LGO advice team by:

Phone: **0300 061 0614**

Text: **0762 481 1595**

Fax: **0330 403 4001**

Online form:

www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint

Information in this fact sheet is correct to the best of our knowledge as of May 2016.

Further information

If you have any questions about this fact sheet please phone (020) 8871 7707,

email accessteam@wandsworth.gov.uk

or minicom (020) 8871 8485.

For information about local services visit our website **www.wandsworth.gov.uk/acis**