How did we do?

Your complaints, comments and compliments
Putting things right, when things go wrong

We aim to provide an excellent experience every time a customer uses our services, but occasionally things do go wrong. When that happens, we would like the opportunity to put things right.

If a service falls below our expected standard, we expect officers to work with customers to resolve any issues as quickly as possible. Where this still does not resolve the issue, customers may want to make a formal complaint.

Complaints, comments and compliments from customers help us identify when we have done well and where we could do better.

What is a complaint?

Complaints are usually made when someone is dissatisfied with a council service and needs an explanation or response. It might be about the:

- Failure or delay in providing a service.
- Quality of service.
- Behaviour of a member of staff.
- Failure to follow an agreed policy.

What isn’t a complaint?

We do not consider the following to be a complaint:

- A request for a service, for example noise nuisance, removal of flytipping, or a missed recycling or waste collection. You can request a service by calling us or use our website to report a problem.
- A request for information or an explanation of council or government policy.
- Where there is a disagreement with the result of a process which has its own appeal process, for example planning decisions, benefit decisions and parking fines.

If you have an issue or complaint about a councillor, please e-mail customerservices@tandridge.gov.uk or write to the Monitoring Officer, Tandridge District Council, Council Offices, 8 Station Road East, Oxted RH8 0BT.

How to make a complaint

To make a complaint you can:

- Complete a complaint form on our website www.tandridge.gov.uk.
- E-mail customerservices@tandridge.gov.uk.
- Write to Customer Services, Tandridge District Council, Council Offices, 8 Station Road East, Oxted RH8 0BT.
- Visit us and we will record the complaint.
- Call 01883 722000 and a Customer Services Advisor will complete a form for a customer over the phone.
We cannot accept a complaint on social media, as it is too difficult to capture information and not practical if it is sensitive or confidential.

While all complaints are dealt with confidentially, we do need contact details, as we cannot deal with anonymous complaints.

**What happens once you have made a complaint?**

We expect many complaints to be quickly and easily resolved by contacting the member of staff or team providing the service. If that is not possible the process outlined below will be followed. At each stage it is important to make clear:

- What the complaint is about.
- Which officers or teams are involved.
- What action has been taken so far.

**Stage 1 - Resolution**

If you are not satisfied with the service you have received from us, you can make a Stage 1 complaint. Our aim is to resolve any complaint we receive at this stage as quickly as possible. Our Team Leaders or Specialists for the service area will investigate complaints and respond.

If you are not happy with the response to your Stage 1 complaint you can escalate it to Stage 2 to be reviewed.

**Stage 2 - Review**

For us to be able to fully respond, you must clearly explain why you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 investigation and what you think we can do to put matters right.

Stage 2 complaints are reviewed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team from a different service area. They will focus on understanding the continuing concerns, whether the Stage 1 Resolution process was undertaken fairly and the conclusions reached reasonable.

While we hope to resolve any complaint immediately, for both stages we will aim to:

- Acknowledge complaints within 2 working days.
- Fully investigate and respond to complaints within 10 working days. Where this is not possible we will contact you to let you know when they can expect a reply.

**Stage 3 Ombudsman**

We hope we can sort out any problems quickly and successfully. If you are still not happy with the response you have received at Stage 2, you will be referred to the Local Government or Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman investigates complaints about councils with the aim of putting things right if they have gone wrong.
How we respond to complaints

When we respond to a complaint we will:

- Contact you by phone or e-mail to clarify our understanding of your complaint.
- Address the issues raised.
- Explain the relevant policy/procedure or level of service provided.
- Set out what we have done to resolve the issue.
- Give a clear decision about whether the complaint is upheld, not upheld or partially upheld.
- Provide details about what you should do if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint.

Where the service has not met our standards, we will:

- Apologise for the failure in service.
- Explain what went wrong and say what has been done to put things right.
- Where appropriate, say what has been learned from the complaint.

After looking into your complaint, if we are at fault we will do our best to put matters right. If we decide we cannot do anything, we will explain why.

Where complaints will be reported

Complaints will be reported each month to the Senior Leadership Team and quarterly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. On our website we will publish details about what has changed as a result of any complaints.

How we manage unreasonable complaint behaviour

We know it is frustrating when we do not meet your expectations. We will do everything we can to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction. We will always treat customers fairly and with respect, regardless of their complaint and most customers who contact us are polite and reasonable.

In return, we ask customers to:

- Treat our staff with respect.
- Not use abusive language or behaviour when dealing with us.
- Comply with all reasonable requests we make in trying to resolve concerns.

On the rare occasion when a customer makes a complaint in an unreasonable way for example repeatedly, obsessively or aggressively, we will write to them explaining what action we are taking to resolve the matter. This could include restricting how the complainant contacts us and who they can contact.