

Hemsworth Town Council

Complaints Procedure

(Approved 3rd August 2023)

1. Hemsworth Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. However, we realise there may be occasions when things go wrong and where you may not be satisfied with the service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.
3. This Complaints Procedure **does not apply to:**
 - 3.1. complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
 - 3.2. complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members first adopted by the Council on 1st July 2012 and, if a
 - 3.3. complaint against a Councillor is received by the council, it will be referred to Wakefield Metropolitan District Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.
4. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out below.
5. HTC is committed to dealing with all complaints in ways which are demonstrably consistent, fair and reasonable as well as quickly as possible. To assist the investigation and possible resolution of your complaint please provide as much detail as possible. For example, The location/site of the subject of your complaint?
Relevant dates and times?
Names of any council staff involved?
How our service failed to meet your expectations? What
you would like us to do to put things right?
6. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within ten working days.

7. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the Complaints Committee of the Council or to the Council (as appropriate).
8. The Clerk or the Complaints Committee of the Council or the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council.
9. The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)
10. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Complaints Committee of the Town Council or to the full Council (as appropriate) and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.
11. Dealing with a complaint is typically a straightforward process but in a minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint, or can have significant resource issues for the council. This can happen either while their complaint is being investigated, or once the council has finished dealing with the complaint.
12. Whist HTC are committed to dealing with all complaints equitably and in a timely manner we will not normally limit the contact which complainants have with council staff or offices.
13. However, we do not expect or accept staff to be subject to, nor will tolerate unacceptable behaviour by complainants, or customers. Typically, we see unacceptable behaviour includes behaviour which is abusive, offensive or threatening and may include:
 - Using abusive or foul language on the telephone;
 - Using abusive or foul language face to face;
 - Any form of intimidating or threatening behaviour;
 - Sending multiple emails;
 - Leaving multiple voicemails
14. We will take action to protect staff from such behaviour. If a complainant behaves in a way that is unreasonably persistent, abusive or vexatious, we reserve the right to limit contact with the complainant and, or to halt the complaint. (Hemsworth Town Council will follow the Local Government Ombudsman's definition of what constitute "unreasonable complainant behaviour" and "unreasonable persistent complaints" that can reasonably be deemed vexatious.)
15. Notwithstanding, such instances raising legitimate queries or criticisms of a complaints procedure as it progresses, for example, if agreed timescales are not met, will not in itself lead to the complaint being regarded as vexatious.

16. Similarly, the fact that a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint and seeks to challenge it once, or more than once, should not necessarily cause him or her to be labelled unreasonably persistent.

Contacts

The Clerk of Hemsworth Town Council

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Telephone: 01977 617617

Email: clerk@hemsworthcouncil.co.uk

The Chairman of Hemsworth Town Council

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