

Complaints Procedure

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by NTCA or any of its officers. We want to make sure that when you tell us that you are not happy with something your complaint is dealt with fairly and sorted out as quickly as possible. We have tried to make our complaints process as straight forward as possible, which is set out below.

Who can complain?

We are open to hearing from anyone who wishes to contact us. When you contact us, please give us your name and address - including your postcode - and your phone number. If you prefer, you can ask a friend or relative to speak or write to us for you.

Email: enquiries@northoftyne-ca.gov.uk

Post: NTCA, The Lumen, Newcastle Helix, St. James Boulevard, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 5BZ.

What can a complaint be about?

The complaint must be about something which the NTCA has responsibility for. This could include

- something that the NTCA is doing/has done
- advice you've been given from NTCA
- how you've been treated by NTCA
- because you've had difficulty getting in contact/a response from NTCA
- a member of NTCA staff
- feeling unfairly treated under a NTCA policy, procedure or process.

If you wish to complain about the NTCA Elected Mayor or a Member of the NTCA Cabinet or any of its committees, these must be made to the NTCA Monitoring Officer. These complaints are dealt with under a different process and more information can be found [here](#).

If the complaint only relates to Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council **or** Northumberland County Council, NTCA is unable to help and you must use their own complaints policy.

[Newcastle City Council Compliments and Complaints](#)

[North Tyneside Council - Complain about council services](#)

[Northumberland County Council Compliments, complaints and suggestions](#)

Initial Complaint (stage one)

Upon receiving your complaint, we will:

- record your complaint
- send you a receipt setting out which process it will follow
- give you a reference number and contact details should you need to get in touch with us

Where possible an officer of the NTCA will do their best to help resolve the issue for you and will respond to you within 10 working days. If it is looking like the answer will take longer then we will let you know the reason for this delay and when we expect to be able to respond in full.

If you are not happy with the outcome of this process you can go through a formal complaints procedure which is outlined below.

Formal Complaint (stage two)

Your complaint will be handled by a senior manager in the team you're complaining about.

For all complaints we will:

- let you know that your complaint has been received within 3 working days.
- provide you with a full response within 20 working days or explain why it might take longer.
- give you details of who has investigated your complaint and their decision on it.
- advise you on how to take your complaint further if you are still unhappy with the result.

Complaint Review (stage three)

If you have been through Steps 1 and 2 of the complaints procedure and you are still not happy with the results of the investigations, you can ask the Director of Policy and Performance to review your complaint. Please do this within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of your formal complaint.

The Director of Policy and Performance will write to you within three working days to let you know:

- that they are reviewing your complaint
- approximately how long it will take us to carry out the review
- when they will send out a written reply.

We aim to complete a complaint review within 25 working days.

If you'd like to take things further

We really hope we are able to resolve any complaints you might have. If however, you are unhappy with the action we have taken, you may want to contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

You can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about your complaint at any time. However, the Ombudsman usually gives NTCA the opportunity to investigate first.

You can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman by:

Post: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH

Phone: 0300 061 0614

Text 'call back' to 0762 480 3014

[Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#) (external website)

Confidentiality

All complaints are dealt with in confidence at every stage, but some information will inevitably be shared for the purpose of investigating your complaint.

The information you provide will:

- be recorded on computer
- be treated by us as confidential under the requirements of the Data Protection Act
- where appropriate, used by us for the effective administration of official business and other official purposes

Circumstances in which the above procedure may not apply

We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who make them. However, there are occasions when contact from a complainant becomes too frequent or complex that it hinders our consideration of their complaints, or those made by other people. We refer to such complainants as either vexatious or unreasonably persistent, and in such cases we may take action to limit the contact the complainant has with us. Such occurrences are rare, and we will first write to the complainant to advise that their contact is no longer considered reasonable.