

# How to Complain

## Complaints Procedure

We aim to provide a high standard of service to all our customers, but we know that we don't always get it right first time. To improve services, we need to know when you are not happy with any part of the service you have received from us or our contractors.

If you feel that the service we have provided has fallen below the standard you expect, please complain. We will investigate your complaint thoroughly, and it will not affect the service we provide to you.

### What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about a council service (whether that service is provided directly by the council or by a contractor or partner) that requires a response. If your complaint is about a minor service failure, for example a single missed bin collection, we will attempt to put it right without the need for you to use this procedure.

### Complaints about councillors

If you have a complaint about a councillor, contact our monitoring officer on **01235 520202** or email [monitoringofficer@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@whitehorsedc.gov.uk).

### Allegations of unlawful actions

If you think we have broken the law, you should do the following.

- If your complaint is about our actions, contact our monitoring officer as explained above.
- If your complaint contains allegations of fraud or corruption, contact the internal audit manager on **01235 520202** or email [internalaudit@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:internalaudit@southandvale.gov.uk)

### Other complaints procedures

There are some issues that we cannot consider using this complaints procedure, because there are alternative rights of appeal. These are:

#### Planning applications

Many of the general complaints we receive are specifically about planning applications. In our experience, some people who have applied for planning permission use the general complaints procedure because they are not happy with us turning down their application. This procedure is not usually appropriate because there is a legal right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate ([www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk](http://www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk)).

In these circumstances, we will usually choose not to deal with the complaint under the general complaints procedure, but will refer you to the separate planning appeal process.

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Similarly, we will not investigate complaints from objectors who are simply unhappy that we have granted planning permission for a particular development, as we only have powers to revoke such a decision in exceptional circumstances.

We will always investigate a complaint about the way we have handled a planning application, if you consider that we have fallen down in some way.

### Benefits

If you are not happy at the way we have calculated benefit entitlement you can ask us to send your appeal to the Tribunal Service for review by an independent tribunal. To do this you should contact us within one calendar month of our decision by email to [vowh.benefits@secure.capita.co.uk](mailto:vowh.benefits@secure.capita.co.uk), or by writing to:

Vale of White Horse District Council  
PO Box 880  
Erith  
DA8 1UN

Tel: 0345 302 2315

### Licensing

If you want to appeal against a decision regarding premises, personal or taxi licences you must lodge that appeal with the magistrates' court within 21 days of the date of our decision.

### Excess charge notices (parking fines)

If you want to dispute an excess charge notice (parking fine), you must do so in writing, preferably within the reduced payment period of the excess charge notice, either by email to [carparks@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:carparks@southandvale.gov.uk), or by writing to:

Car parks team  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Abbey House  
Abingdon  
Oxfordshire  
OX14 3JE

We will always investigate other complaints about the car parks service.

## **How do I make a formal complaint?**

We would prefer you to lodge your complaint via our website at <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/about-us/how-we-work/contact-us/complaints> or by email to [complaints@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@whitehorsedc.gov.uk). If you are unable to use either of those methods, please complete the form on the back of this leaflet or write to:

Chief Executive's PA  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Abbey House  
Abbey Close  
Abingdon  
OX14 3JE

## Appendix 1

If you are unable to make your complaint in writing, due to disability or limited English for example, please call the chief executive's PA on **01235 540303**, text phone users add 18001 before you dial.

### What happens when I make a formal complaint?

Your complaint will go through the following procedure.

#### Stage one

The chief executive's PA will confirm receipt of your complaint, within two working days, and pass it to the relevant head of service. She will also establish what outcome you are seeking, if that is not already clear.

The head of service will then investigate your complaint and let you know the outcome within 20 calendar days.

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you can go on to stage two

#### Stage two

You can contact the chief executive's PA, preferably by email, and ask for your complaint to be investigated further. You must explain why you are not satisfied with the response you received at stage one.

We will let you know we have received your letter and an independent member of the strategic management board, i.e. not the strategic director whose portfolio the complaint relates to, will investigate your complaint and let you know the outcome within 20 calendar days.

If you are not satisfied with the response you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman.

### Local Government Ombudsman

The ombudsman is not part of the Vale of White Horse District Council and will take an independent look at your complaint. The ombudsman's service is confidential and free of charge. If you would like a leaflet that explains the process, contact us or write to:

The Local Government Ombudsman  
The Oaks  
Westwood Way  
Westwood Business Park  
Coventry  
CV4 8JB.

Phone: 0300 061 0614  
Website: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

## Appendix 1

To process complaints we will need to hold your information on computer. We may use this information to research how satisfied customers are with this service.

### Complaints form

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Please give details of your complaint and explain what outcome you are seeking:

**Please return this form to:**

Chief Executive's PA  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Abbey House  
Abbey Close  
Abingdon  
Oxfordshire  
OX14 3JE

## Appendix 1

# Equal opportunities monitoring form

To help us improve the service we provide, please fill in this form. We will keep the information you provide confidential.

Are you:

Male   
Female

How old are you?

Under 16  35-44   
16-24  45-54   
25-34  55-64   
65+

Do you have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities?

Yes   
No

How would you best describe your ethnic background?

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>White</b></p> <p>English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British ..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Irish ..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Gypsy or Irish Traveller ..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Any other white background (PLEASE WRITE IN)..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Black or Black British</b></p> <p>Caribbean ..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>African..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Any other Black background (PLEASE WRITE IN)..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mixed or multiple ethnic groups</b></p> <p>White &amp; Black Caribbean ..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>White &amp; Black African..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>White &amp; Asian ..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Any other mixed background (PLEASE WRITE IN)..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Asian or Asian British</b></p> <p>Indian ..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Pakistani ..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Bangladeshi ..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Chinese..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Any other Asian background (PLEASE WRITE IN)..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other ethnic group</b></p> <p>Arab ..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Other ethnic group (PLEASE WRITE IN) <input type="checkbox"/></p>

## Appendix 1

**Alternative formats of this publication are available on request. These include large print, Braille, audio cassette or CD, email and alternative languages.**

此文檔備有中文版本以供選擇。如需索取，請通過以下的電話聯繫地區議會。如果您不會講英語，您可以請講英語的親屬或朋友為您代勞。

**Please contact the chief executive's PA on ☎ 01235 540303**