



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Comment Compliment Complaint



www.bedford.gov.uk/beheard

**Bedford Borough Council welcomes feedback from our customers.
We will use the feedback you give to improve our services.**

Comment

You may wish to share a suggestion or idea about how we can improve our services.

Compliment

You may wish to tell us about a service that has been good or a member of staff who has been helpful.

Complaint

You may want to complain if the standard of service falls short of what you would expect, or if a member of staff does not do what they said they will.

Independent advice and advocacy

An advocate is someone who can help you to speak up for yourself or speak on your behalf, so you can have your views heard. They can attend meetings with you, carry out correspondence and telephone calls for you and third parties, and support you if you want to make a formal complaint.

VoiceAbility provide independent advocacy services in Bedford Borough, it is a free and confidential service. To find out more visit their website at:



www.voiceability.org

You can also contact them by phone or email:



0300 303 1660



helpline@voiceability.org

Representation

You have the right for someone to make a complaint on your behalf. We will ask you to give consent for them to do this.

The Complaints Process

Complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt. You will be provided with details of how the Council proposes to handle your complaint including details of who will respond to your complaint and by when.

You will also be provided with details of the complaints procedure and what you can do if you are not satisfied with the action we propose to take to put things right.

Our complaints process has two stages: service resolution and senior level investigation.

Stage 1 - Service Resolution

Most complaints will be managed at this stage of the process.

You will normally receive a written response within 10 working days from the date the full details of complaint are received. If the complaint is complex it may take up to 20 working days. If this is not possible, we will explain why and provide you with another date by when you can expect to receive a response.

Your response will:

- Include the outcome of the Stage 1 investigation.
- Advise you if the complaint has been upheld or not and the reasons why
- Inform you of your right to request a Senior Level Investigation (Stage 2) where appropriate.

If you are not happy with the response to your complaint, Customer Relations may offer you a meeting with a manager to try and sort things out. This does not stop you from asking your complaint to be considered at Stage 2 if you so wish.

Stage 2 - Senior Level Investigation

If you remain unhappy with the response you receive at Stage 1 you can request a Stage 2 investigation.

You will need to state the following:

- What issues of complaint you are unhappy with.
- The reason why you remain unhappy.
- What you are expecting from the Stage 2 investigation.

We would normally expect to receive a request for Stage 2 within 28 days of the Stage 1 response being sent to you.

Your complaint will be allocated to a senior manager and you will receive an acknowledgment letter, setting out who will respond to your complaint and when you can expect a written response. Your response will include:

- The outcome of the Stage 2 investigation.
- Advise you if the complaint has been upheld or not and the reason why.
- Inform you of your right to appeal to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

We will aim to send you a response within 25 working days from the date the Stage 2 request is received. If this is not possible, we will explain why and provide you with another date by when you can expect to receive a response.

If a complaint is deemed serious enough then the complaint can be started at Stage 2. This will ensure that it is responded to by a suitably senior member of staff and that enough time can be allocated for the investigation.

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

If you have been through all stages of our complaints procedure and are still unhappy, you can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to review your complaint.

The Ombudsman investigates complaints in a fair and independent way - it does not take sides. It is a free service.

The Ombudsman expects you to have given us chance to deal with your complaint, before you contact them. If you have not heard from us within a reasonable time, it may decide to look into your complaint anyway. This is usually up to 12 weeks but can be longer for social care complaints that follow a statutory process.

About the Ombudsman

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is the final stage for complaints about councils and some other organisations providing local public services. It also investigates complaints about all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) for people who self-fund their care.

Contact



www.lgo.org.uk



0300 061 0614



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

How to contact us and give feedback

- Complete the form attached to this leaflet.
- Telephone or write to the service area concerned and speak to the manager.
- Telephone Customer Feedback Team on **01234 228597**
- Email Customer Feedback Team at **be.heard@bedford.gov.uk**
- Visit our website **www.bedford.gov.uk/beheard** and fill in an online form

Complaints that Involve other organisations

Where a complaint involves another organisation we will work closely with the other organisation to try and ensure you receive a single coordinated response. We will require your permission before sharing information with another organisation.

Complaints about Social Care

Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care have separate complaints procedures. Separate leaflets are available for these areas. Contact the Customer Relations Team or visit our website for further information.

Complaints about Schools

Parents who have a complaint about a school should contact the school concerned for details of their complaints procedures. Generally most complaints can be resolved informally with the child's class teacher, form tutor or Head of Year. If not, parents should write to the Headteacher and if the matter is still not resolved write to the Chair of Governors at the school address.

Other Processes

Some services, for example planning, highways and parking enforcement, have set processes for investigating issues raised or appealing decisions. These processes should always be used before making a complaint.

If these procedures are concluded then it may be possible to use the complaints procedure to investigate the issues, however in most cases this is unlikely to reverse any decisions made as part of these separate processes.

Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please telephone or write to us at our address below.

Për Informacion

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برای اطلاع

Per Informazione

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Informacja

Za Informacije

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01234 228597



be.heard@bedford.gov.uk



Customer Feedback Team

Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street,
Bedford, MK42 9AP



www.bedford.gov.uk/beheard

Customer Feedback Form

Comment, Compliment or Complaint

Title: Last Name:

First Names:

Address:

Phone number:

Email address:

What service are you giving feedback about?

What is your feedback? *Attach a separate sheet if necessary*

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What would you like to see happen?

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If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else please give their details here. We will need their consent in order to proceed.

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If your complaint relates to an agency outside of the Council, are you happy for us to share your details with them?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Signature:

Date:

Please now place this form in an envelope and post it to the address below.

**Customer Feedback Team, Bedford Borough Council,
Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP**

GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018

Under new Data Protection regulations (GDPR) Bedford Borough council needs to inform you of the reasons why we are capturing your data and what we will do with your data. Any personal data collected and/or processed under this policy/procedure will be dealt with in accordance with Data Protection Legislation and the Council's Data Protection Policy. Data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, only individuals where relevant to this policy/procedure. To find out more information on this follow the link below.

To view the council's current Privacy Notices including one for Customer Feedback at www.bedford.gov.uk/gdprprivacy