

### Corporate Complaints Procedure

#### Stage 1 - Problem Solving

Acknowledged within two working days, stating the name of the person/section dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect to receive a reply.

Complaints should be responded to within ten working days by the Lead Officer. If it is not possible to send a full reply within ten working days a holding reply should be sent, telling the complainant who is dealing with the complaint and what action is being taken.

#### Stage 2 - Formal Investigation

If a complainant is still unhappy after the complaint has been dealt with at stage 1 they can ask for a further investigation to be carried out at stage 2 of the procedure by the Standards & Complaints team.

The Standards and Complaints team aim to conclude all Stage 2 investigations within 20 working days. When this is not possible, the Standards & Complaints Team will ensure the complainant is informed of progress.

#### Local Government Ombudsman

Any member of the public can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman at any time. A leaflet "How to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman" is available at main council reception desks or from the Standards & Complaints Team.

# **Statutory Complaints Procedure**

## **Stage 1 - Problem Solving**

- The complainant and local staff and /or manager seek to find a solution to the problem.
- If this is not possible the problem is referred to the Head of Service for their consideration.

## **Stage 2 - Investigation**

- The complainant wishes to pursue a matter that it has not been possible to resolve at the first stage. At this stage the written complaint is acknowledged and logged.
- An Independent Investigating Officer is appointed to investigate.
- The complaint is investigated within 28 days and a report sent to the complainant and interested parties.

## **Stage 3 - Review Panel**

- The complainant remains dissatisfied and requests a Complaints Review Panel.
- The complainant puts a case to the Panel.
- The Department explains its response to the complainant.
- The written recommendations of the Panel are sent to the Director of Children, Families and Schools, the complainant and all interested parties.
- The Director reviews the decision in light of the Complaints Review Panel's recommendations.

## **Ombudsman**

- The complainant if still dissatisfied is advised of his option to pursue his/her complaint with the Ombudsman.

