

Complaints, comments and compliments



www.kent.gov.uk

tel: 03000 41 41 41

text relay: 18001 03000 41 41 41

email: County.hall@kent.gov.uk



At Kent County Council we are committed to putting you, our customer, at the heart of everything we do. We understand that the best way to improve our services is to listen to our customers. We welcome comments, complaints and compliments.

If you are particularly pleased with a member of staff or service, please let us know. You can contact the member of staff you have most contact with or if you prefer, write to the relevant corporate director.

We also value complaints because we need to know when things are going wrong, so that we can put them right and learn from them. That way we can improve our services for all our customers.

How to complain about KCC services

There are separate procedures for complaints about Adult Social Services and Children's Social Services, for complaints about schools and for complaints relating to the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act. These are described on page four. For all other KCC services:

1. Please start by talking to, writing to or e-mailing the person you have been dealing with at the county council, or their immediate manager. Most problems can be resolved this way.

If the problem can't be resolved straight away, you can expect to receive an acknowledgement to your complaint within three working days of receipt, and normally a full reply within 20 working days. If your complaint raises complex issues which cannot be answered within 20 working days, we will keep you informed of progress at four-weekly intervals until we are able to respond fully to your complaint.
2. If you feel you need to pursue your complaint further, then please contact the corporate director responsible for the service you have been dealing with (the addresses can be found at the back of this leaflet).

Alternatively you can e-mail your complaint to county.hall@kent.gov.uk, or telephone/typetalk our Contact Centre on 03000 414141 or Text Relay: 18001 03000 414141 or complain via our website at www.kent.gov.uk/complaints.
3. If you are still not satisfied after these steps have been taken, you have the right to take your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (except for Freedom of Information and Data Protection complaints – see page three).

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is an independent and impartial person, appointed by central government to investigate complaints of maladministration by local authorities. A leaflet explaining how to complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is available direct from the Ombudsman's office.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
www.lgo.org.uk
Advice-line: 0300 061 0614

Adult Social Services and Children's Social Services

If you are a customer of Adult Social Services or Children's Social Services, or a carer for a customer, there is a separate procedure if you wish to make a complaint about the service that you or the person you care for have received. Please ask our Contact Centre on telephone 03000 41 61 61, text relay 18001 03000 41 61 61 for the separate leaflet which gives full details of this procedure, or visit our website www.kent.gov.uk or write to the contact address on the back of this leaflet.

The relevant Social Services Customer Care Team will be able to explain the complaints procedure to you.

Schools and Academies

Schools and academies deal with complaints themselves.

Each school and academy is required to have its own complaints procedure which should be available to parents, pupils and members of the public. In most cases you should be able to find the complaints procedure on the school or academy's own website; otherwise you can ask the school for a copy. The complaints procedure will focus on resolving concerns as early as possible.

Complaints procedures may vary, however they generally include progression through the following stages:

Stage 1: Raise your complaint with a staff member (though not if they are the subject of the complaint).

Stage 2: Progress your complaint to the head teacher or Head of School if you are not satisfied with the first response.

Stage 3: Progress your complaint to the Chair of Governors.

Stage 4: Progress your complaint to the Governing Body's complaints appeal panel.

If your complaint is about the headteacher write to the Chair of Governors for the school.

If you go through all 4 stages and are not happy with the response, you can write to the Secretary of State for Education about a maintained school or to the Education Funding Agency if you are dealing with an academy. You will need to list the steps you have already taken and the responses you have received. For a complaint about a maintained school write to:

The Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
London SW1

Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to a request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Data Protection Act 2018, and you believe KCC has not complied with legislation, you should ask for a review

by writing to the Head of Paid Service. Please quote your request reference number wherever possible.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you can complain to the Information Commissioner. Advice on the Information Commissioner's role is available from his office (telephone /typetalk 0303 123 1113) e-mail casework@ico.org.uk or visit the website: www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Who can help me make a complaint?

You can get help from people like your county councillor or MP, or from a specialist advice or advocacy organisation.

Your local county councillor may be able to help resolve your complaint by pursuing it on your behalf. You can find out the name and address of your county councillor from our Contact Centre on 03000 414141 or by logging on to our website www.kent.gov.uk, go to the 'About the Council' page and follow the 'Find your County Councillors' link.

The address to write to your county councillor is:
Members' Desk
Kent County Council
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
ME14 1XQ

You can find out who your MP is at: <https://members.parliament.uk/constituencies/> or by calling the House of Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272.

You can write to your MP at the following address:
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Complaining about a county councillor

Kent's county councillors all adhere to a code of conduct. If you want to complain about the conduct of a councillor of Kent County Council you can:

Complete the online councillor complaints form or complaints form on www.kent.gov.uk

E-mail your complaint to democratic.services@kent.gov.uk

Write to:
Democratic Services
Kent County Council
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1XQ

Complaints alleging that councillors have breached the code of conduct are reviewed by the Monitoring Officer or in consultation with the Independent Person, where appropriate. They will decide if any action should be taken and if the matter should be referred to the Standards Committee.

They will not deal with complaints about things that are not covered by the Kent Code of Conduct for Members. Your complaint must state why you think the councillor has not followed the Kent Code of Conduct for Members.

Treating everyone fairly

We want to make sure that everyone can use the complaint procedure. Please telephone/typetalk our contact centre on 03000 41 41 41 and Text Relay: 18001 03000 41 41 41 if you would like this leaflet:

- in another language
- in Braille
- in larger print
- on audio cassette or CD.

If you wish to put your complaint about one of our services in writing, please write to the most appropriate Corporate Director listed opposite:

For complaints about Finance, Freedom of Information, Information Systems, Governance and Law, Human Resources or Property, Contact Centre Gateways, Communication and Consultation, write to:

Corporate Director
Strategic and Corporate Services
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

For complaints about Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing write to:

Corporate Director
Social Care, Health and Wellbeing
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

For complaints about Education, Early Years, Children's Social Care, Community Learning and Skills Youth and Community and Childcare, write to:

Corporate Director
Education and Young People's Services
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

For complaints about Highways, Minerals and Waste Planning, Recycling or Economic Development write to:

Corporate Director
Growth, Environment and Transport
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XX

Alternatively, you can write to the Head of Paid Service (who will usually arrange for your complaint to be investigated by the Director of the service concerned).

David Cockburn
Head of Paid Service
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ