

Customer Feedback and Complaints Handling Policy

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1. Introduction

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is striving to make the West Midlands the best place to live, work and visit. We aim to give the best customer service possible and strive to get things right, first time every time.

We know that things don't always go as expected and therefore, we welcome all feedback regarding our work and the services we provide. We use this information to review how we do things and to identify where we can do better. This Customer Feedback and Complaints Handling Policy explains how we listen to your feedback, how we deal with concerns, and what you can expect from us if you make a complaint. This policy covers the full scope of WMCA's activities and our Officers, including the work of [Transport for West Midlands](#).

If you need information regarding our Customer Feedback and Complaints Handling Policy in a different format like accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille; please [contact us](#).

2. Our Aims and Objectives

We are committed to putting you first and aim to provide quality customer service.

If you need to make a complaint you will be treated fairly and will not be disadvantaged in any way for raising your concerns. If you make a complaint, it will also not affect your right to receive or use products or services provided by WMCA.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Make it as easy as possible for you to let us know when something goes wrong and to tell us about your complaint.
- Ensure that complaints are handled in a consistent, fair and appropriate manner.
- Deal with your complaint promptly, fairly and when appropriate, confidentially.
- Resolve informal issues and service requests quickly and through an informal approach when appropriate and achievable.
- Keep you informed about the progress of your complaint and do everything we can to support you.
- Carry out a full investigation when needed, considering all relevant aspects and contacting you for more information when necessary.
- Respond appropriately - for example, by providing an explanation or offering an apology where we have made mistakes.
- Communicate in a clear and straightforward way, using plain English in all written responses.
- Learn from the complaints that we receive so that we can continually improve our services.

3. Complaints and Service Requests: What we can consider

WMCA can investigate complaints relating to our work, the products and services that we deliver as well as our people.

Before getting in touch, please ensure that you are raising your issue with the right organisation. WMCA has not replaced the role of Local Authorities which remain responsible for delivering most public services within local communities. Your Local Authority is the organisation to which you pay your council tax.

We aim to resolve most issues informally and without you needing to make a complaint - we call these service requests. You can make a service request asking us to:

- Provide or improve a service
- Fix a problem
- Reconsider a decision already made

Sometimes issues can be resolved quickly by making a service request. This allows our Customer Services Team to take immediate action to put things right without the need for a formal investigation.

If we find that more detailed enquiries are needed, we can record the matter as a Stage 1 complaint if you wish. Any formal complaint will then be passed to the appropriate officer, depending on the stage and seriousness of the issue.

If you do not wish to make a service request, or if you are dissatisfied with our work, products or services - including actions taken, or not taken, by our employees, you may choose to make a complaint instead. We welcome your feedback and will make sure it is handled fairly and appropriately.

4. Complaints that need to be considered under different policies and procedures

Some complaints may need to be investigated under different procedures. If this applies to your complaint or we are unable to investigate it, we will contact you to explain why. This includes:

- Third parties - if your complaint relates to a third-party supplier for example a transport operator, in some cases it may be possible to jointly investigate and provide you with a single response. This may involve sharing information about your complaint with the third party. If your complaint is more suited for consideration by the third party under their own complaints' procedure, we will pass on the details directly to the third party and let you know we have done this. Please see our [Privacy Statement](#) for further information on how we handle your personal data.

- Your personal information - if your complaint relates to the handling of your personal information, or about your request for information, we are required to consider it in line with the requirements of the Information Commissioner's Office. This type of complaint will not be considered under this policy but can be sent to us by contacting our Data Protection Officer at Information.Officer@wmca.org.uk
- The Mayor of the West Midlands and Members of WMCA Board - if your complaint relates to the actions or behaviour of members of WMCA Board including the Mayor, it will not be considered under this policy. This type of complaint can be sent to us by contacting our Monitoring Officer via customerservices@wmca.org.uk
- Training or Education Providers - if your complaint relates to a training or education provider offering employment support funded by WMCA through the Employment Skills, Health and Communities (ESHC) Team, you will need to make your complaint to the Provider directly in the first instance. WMCA can only investigate this type of complaint when you have exhausted the Provider's own Complaints Procedure, including any right of appeal. Please see additional information regarding complaints about Employment and Skills providers here: [ESHC Complaints Procedure](#)
- Petitions – If your complaint is made on behalf of a group and asks us to take a specific action, it will be treated as a petition rather than an individual complaint. Petitions are handled under our separate [Petitions Protocol](#) and are not managed through this policy. You can send your petition to us by contacting our Customer Services Team at customerservices@wmca.org.uk

If you are not sure which policy applies, just tell us what happened, and we will make sure your issue is handled through the correct process.

5. What is not a complaint under this policy

Some matters will not be treated as a complaint. Where this is the case, we will let you know and explain why your issue cannot be considered under this policy. This includes some failures of service which may be considered as a service request. See section 3 for further information.

Here are some things we cannot deal with through our complaints policy:

- When a problem or fault is first reported or is an initial request for a service.
- Compensation claims which are being dealt with by WMCA's insurers.
- Grievances from existing, or former employees about their employment. These issues will be referred to our Human Resources team to consider under the relevant people policies and procedures.
- Decisions or actions that were made legally and followed the correct processes, even if you disagree with them. For example, a decision made in line with WMCA's approved policies or published criteria.
- Issues where WMCA has followed the law or its policies, and you already have the right to appeal the decision.

- Complaints about matters that are handled by another official appeals body or tribunal service.
- Matters that are, or could reasonably end up, in court or before a tribunal and therefore need to be considered through the correct legal processes.
- Complaints about how contracts or tenders are awarded which are handled through our formal procurement processes.
- Complaints about the conduct of an election. These are handled by the Returning Officer appointed for that election.

6. How to make a complaint

You should complain to us within 12 months of the issue first happening. We will not normally act on any complaint made after a period of 12 months however, we will consider any exceptional reasons you may give us for not meeting this time limit.

Complaints can be investigated most easily when reported quickly after an issue occurs. In the case of a complaint about services you have received from us via the telephone, we record and store telephone calls for a maximum of 40 days.

To help us with our investigation please include:

- Your name and contact details;
- Details of what your complaint is about along with any supporting documents;
- Date, time and location (if applicable); and
- As much other relevant information that you can provide

You can make a complaint by:

Webform: customerservices@wmca.org.uk

Post: Customer Relations, 16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD

Phone: [0345 303 6760](tel:03453036760)*

* Telephone lines are open from 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday (except Wednesday 1000 to 1800). This is not a free service and calls will be charged at your phone provider's rate or contracted mobile service plan. We are closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

If you prefer, you can ask a friend or relative to speak or write to us for you. We will need your permission if you would like someone to act on your behalf. We are also able to offer a telephone interpreting service for non-English speakers on request.

7. Our Complaints Handling Process

WMCA can consider your complaint at two formal stages although we aim to resolve any service requests informally wherever possible. If at any stage your complaint needs more time than expected to investigate, we will let you know. Our complaints handling process is explained below.

Stage 1 Formal Complaint

You can raise a formal complaint by contacting our Customer Services Team.

Stage 2 Formal Response

Our Customer Services Manager or nominated representative, will investigate your complaint and respond to you directly within 10 working days of receiving it. If it is not possible to resolve your complaint within this time, we will let you know.

Stage 2 Formal Complaint

If you have received a response to your complaint and are unhappy with the outcome, you may ask for it to be reviewed. You can do this by sending your request in writing to our Customer Services Team within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 1 response.

Stage 2 Formal Response

An independent Investigating Officer who has not been involved in your original complaint will investigate your complaint and provide a final response to you directly within 20 working days of receiving it. If it is not possible to resolve your complaint within this time, the Investigating Officer will let you know.

To ensure your complaint is investigated fairly and impartially at all stages of the process, any WMCA Officer who is the subject of, or has a direct interest in a complaint, shall be excluded from any role in the investigation, decision-making, or oversight of that complaint. In the event of a complaint regarding a Statutory Officer, independent arrangements for investigating that complaint will be made.

8. What happens if you are still not happy

If you have received a Stage 2 response from WMCA and you remain unhappy with the outcome, you can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to review your complaint. You can contact the Ombudsman at any time about your complaint however, they usually give WMCA the opportunity to investigate and respond first.

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

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

Text: 'call back' to [07624 811 595](tel:07624811595)

Phone: [0300 061 0614](tel:03000610614)

[Read more about what the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman will do.](#)

9. Managing Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour

Occasionally customers may pursue a complaint in an unreasonable way which impacts on WMCA's resources and capacity to respond to their, or other people's complaints. We may identify this type of complaint as unreasonable and manage it under a [separate policy available on our website](#). If WMCA applies this policy to you and your complaint, we will write to you to explain the reasons for the decision.

You can read our [Accessibility Statement](#).

Request a copy

To request a copy of this document in a format better suited to your needs please contact us on 0345 303 6760