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|  |
|  | Harlow Council |
|  | Civic Centre |
|  | The Water Gardens |
|  | Harlow, Essex |
|  | CM20 1WG |
| By Email – [xxxx@xxx.com](mailto:xxxx@xxx.com) (Delete as required) |  | www.harlow.gov.uk |
|  |  |  |
|  | | Date: |

Complaint Reference Number xxx

Dear xxxxx

Thank you for your e-mail which was received on date. This is being treated as a stage two complaint.

My name is name and job title and I have been appointed by the Chief Executive to review your complaint. My understanding of it is (paragraph summary max)

Main Response…

This must include:

* The reasons for any decisions made
* The details of any remedy offered to put things right
* It must cover all aspects of the complaints made
* In housing cases include appointment dates or a commitment for an appointment date to be available within two weeks.
* If anything is to be followed up, full details of any outstanding actions must be provided with dates.
* If we have got it wrong, say sorry!

Having fully reviewed your complaint, I can advise you that your complaint has been (upheld/partially upheld/not upheld).

This is our final position, based on the information we have.

If you remain unhappy, you can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) to review your complaint. You usually have up to 12 months to do this, starting from the date you first knew about the matter you complained about, not from the date of this letter. The Ombudsman will normally only consider complaints made within that time but can decide to look at older complaints if there is a good reason to do so.

The Ombudsman looks at individual complaints about councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. They investigate matters fairly and impartially and they are free to use.

There are some matters the Ombudsman cannot or will not investigate. In these cases they will explain clearly the reason for their decision. The Ombudsman’s contact details are on the attached complaints summary. You will need to provide them with a copy of this letter, and our earlier responses to you, so they can consider your complaint.

Yours sincerely

signature

**Name**

Job Title

Contact details

# Harlow Council complaints summary

### How to complain

We have a two stage process to ensure that all complaints are looked into thoroughly. All complaints should be made through Contact Harlow. This can be done through our website, by email, phone, letter or by calling in person.

We will help customers make their complaint through one of the methods described above and progress through the stages if required.

If your complaint is something we can’t investigate then we will tell you.

Regardless of the point of access, any complaints will be dealt with at the lowest stage possible unless there is good reason to escalate it to the next stage.

### Stage one – Service Manager

If you are unhappy with any service you have received from Harlow Council, you should complain to Contact Harlow who will pass your complaint to the senior manager of the service you originally dealt with. They have the authority to resolve most problems.

You will need to tell us what is wrong and what you think can be done to put it right.

We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days, give you a reference number, tell when you can expect a full reply and who is dealing with the complaint.

You should get a full response within a maximum of 10 working days. If for any reason this is not possible, we will tell you.

### Stage two – Director or Assistant Director

If within 28 days you are unhappy with the response at stage one, you should go back to Contact Harlow to start the second and final stage of the process. Your complaint will be passed to a Director or Assistant Director who will review the response given and outline their findings to you.

You will need to tell us what is wrong, why the response you received to the stage one complaint didn’t resolve the issue and what you think can be done to put it right.

We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days, give you a reference number, tell when you can expect a full reply and who is reviewing the complaint.

You should get a full response within a maximum of 20 working days. If for any reason this is not possible, we will tell you.

## Further help

If you have exhausted our process and you remain dissatisfied, you can approach the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman depending on the nature of your complaint. They would expect people contacting them to have made use of the council’s two stage complaints process first. We will advise you how to do this when we reply to you.

At any stage you may refer your complaint to your local councillor or MP. They may help resolve your complaint, however they are subject to the normal workings and timescales. Details of how to contact your local councillor or MP can be found on our website.

## Unreasonable complaint behaviour

We define unreasonable complainant behaviour as those customers who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the council, hinder the consideration of their or other people’s complaints.

Should a complaint be considered to be without foundation or deliberately repetitious then council’s separate ‘unacceptable behaviour policy’ may be applied.

## Getting help with complaints or appeals

If you would like someone to help with your complaint or to speak on your behalf at an appeal, please speak to a Customer Advisor who will give you details of organisations that can help you. In the matter of housing cases, you may want to appoint an advocate from the tenants and leaseholders’ group to help. For further details please speak to a Customer Advisor.

## Useful contact details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Contact Harlow**  Civic Centre The Water Gardens  Harlow, Essex  CM20 1WG  Telephone: 01279 446655  Web: [www.harlow.gov.uk](http://www.harlow.gov.uk) | **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**  Telephone: 0300 061 0614  Web: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)  **Housing Ombudsman**  Telephone: 0300 111 3000  Web: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk) |

A full copy of our complaints policy and our unacceptable behaviour policy can be found at [www.harlow.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/complaints)

Harlow Council Complaints Summary – April 2024