Comments, compliments or complaints about Council services

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk
This booklet tells you how to give your comments, compliments or complaints about the Council.

We welcome all feedback so that we can learn how we could make our services better or where our current services are meeting your needs.

You can send us your feedback:

- Through our website
  www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/complaintsprocedure

- By email
  customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

- By telephone
  01344 352000

- By letter (see address on pages 9, 14, 15 and 16)

- By using the feedback form at the back of this booklet

- Or in person at a reception area
Charter for customers

In providing services, Bracknell Forest Council will:

• Always put you first and treat you fairly and as an individual.

• Adopt a friendly and approachable style.

• Be open and straightforward.

• Listen to what you are saying.

• Provide well trained staff who will deal with your enquiry in a professional and sensitive manner.

• Deal with your enquiry at the first point of contact wherever possible.

• Take ownership of your enquiry.

• Ensure that you are advised of all relevant timescales.

• Treat the personal information received from you in the strictest confidence.

• Conduct surveys to obtain your feedback.

• Take notice of, learn from and act on your feedback.

• Continually aim to improve our service and performance.
Our commitment to you

Bracknell Forest Council is committed to providing quality services which are effective and value for money. We welcome your feedback because it helps us develop our services. Your feedback (good or bad) lets us know when we have provided a good service. For example, that could be:

- A quick service;
- Some useful advice;
- A member of staff who was particularly helpful or;
- Where the service you received was better than you had expected.

If, however you think that we could do better, please let us know where we need to improve. Where we have made a mistake, please let us know so we can put things right and learn and make changes to try to stop it happening again. A complaint could refer to an occasion when you feel that we have:

- Not provided a good service;
- Done something wrong;
- Not done something we should have;
- Not done something in time, or within the time promised or;
- Not treated a person in a professional manner.

Later in this booklet you will find details of our complaints procedure.
How do you make a complaint?

We hope to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity. If this is not possible, our complaints procedure has three stages and at each stage your complaint will be considered by someone different. If your complaint is about an education or social care issue, please turn to page 9.

If your complaint is because you feel that you have been discriminated against on whatever grounds, your complaint should go straight to stage 2 and you should send it to the Director of the service area involved.

If you need help at any point making your complaint, you may contact the Council’s Customer Services team by telephoning 01344 352000, or in person, and ask them to write down your complaint for you. Or Citizens Advice will help you. Please make sure that you agree with what has been written down.

Please note, if your complaint is one of the types listed on page 8, you need to use the appeals process associated with that service. All appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the Regulators Code.

STAGE 1

We want to put things right as quickly as possible and this can usually be done if you speak directly to the staff providing the service first. For example, if your complaint is about a library or a sports centre, you should first speak to the staff at the site. If you believe that the response has not properly dealt with your complaint, please ask to speak with an operations manager who will try to resolve the matter for you.

If you are still not satisfied after discussing the matter with the staff providing the service then you should complain by following stage 2 of the procedure.

STAGE 2

To start this stage, send your complaint to the Director responsible for the service area you wish to complain about. Ideally you may do this by completing the form on the Council’s website www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/complaintsprocedure

However, you may also make your complaint by the following methods, but in each case you must make sure you have included all the points in the form:
• email,
• letter,
• telephone
• using the form attached inside the back cover of this booklet,
• or in person at our Customer Service centre.

We will ensure all complaints get to the service manager, however they are made.

A list of contact details is printed on pages 14 to 16 of this booklet, if you wish to use an alternative way to make your complaint.

Once the Director receives your complaint, they will decide who is most appropriate to deal with it. This may be the Director themselves, or the Chief Officer with responsibility for the service concerned, or another appropriate officer. The Director will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, and will let you know who is going to deal with it. We will investigate your complaint, and normally within ten working days send you a full written reply, or let you know if our reply will take longer, explaining the reason for the delay.

**STAGE 3 – IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED …..**

We hope that we would have resolved your complaint. However if you feel that we have not, you may write to the Chief Executive of the Council, within ten working days of the Director’s/Chief Officer’s reply. If we do not hear from you within ten working days of our reply at stage 2, we will close the complaint. You will be asked to give reasons why you remain dissatisfied, with particular reference to the response you have received. It is not normally acceptable simply to repeat the complaint. This will then become a complaint at stage 3 of the procedure.

The Chief Executive will consider whether your complaint has already been dealt with properly, and if so, will write to let you know. Alternatively, the Chief Executive may suggest a solution. If the Chief Executive is not able to resolve the matter straight away, they will personally investigate your complaint or appoint another senior officer who has not previously been involved, to investigate. In some circumstances a review panel will be set up to deal with your complaint, if the Chief Executive considers this appropriate.

The review panel will review the findings of the Director or Chief Officer at stage 2 of the procedure, but will not carry out further investigation. A review panel will consist of two independent people and a borough councillor and
you will be invited to attend to present your complaint, either in person or with the help of a representative.

The senior officer or review panel will make recommendations to the Chief Executive as to whether or not your complaint should be upheld, and if so, what remedial action, if any, the Council should take. The Chief Executive will, following consideration of the report of the review panel, make a final decision on your complaint.

The Local Government Ombudsman

We aim to resolve your complaint. However, if you are not satisfied with our final response at Stage Three, you may contact the Local Government Ombudsman at:

The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH
Website: www.lgo.org.uk
Telephone: 0300 061 0614

The Ombudsman will expect you to have given us a chance to look at your complaint before they will investigate. So please make sure you have followed the procedure outlined in this booklet before you contact the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman provides a booklet and information on their website about how they will operate.

Do all complaints follow this procedure?

Some complaints are covered by other procedures and for these you should not use the procedure described in this booklet for:

Complaints where another procedure exists
These will include:
- appeals against refusal of planning permission
- appeals about the issuing of a car parking notice
- complaints about Elected Members
- complaints by employees or former employees relating to an employment matter

Complaints about these services are dealt with using the appropriate appeals processes, and in accordance with the Regulators Code, where appropriate.
Complaints about social care
By law, these must be dealt with under a separate procedure. You should contact either:

Adult social care
The Complaints Manager, Adult Social Care, Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1JD
Telephone: 01344 351736
Email: asc.complaints@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Children’s social care
The Complaints Manager, Children’s Social Care, Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1JD
Telephone: 01344 351737
Email: childrens.servicescomplaints@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

If you are not sure where your complaint should be addressed, you can find help in the following places:

Website: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/complaintsprocedure

Council office (Time Square)
Our opening hours are Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 5.00pm

Main telephone number
Tel: 01344 352000

Complaints about schools

Complaints regarding schools are dealt with by school governing bodies. The first step is to contact the head teacher of the school.

There are also special arrangements for:
• Appeals about admission to, or exclusion from, school.
• Appeals about special educational needs provision.
• Complaints about the curriculum, religious education and collective worship.
A separate booklet is available for these complaints. To receive a copy, or further advice, please contact Customer Services on 01344 352000, or email: education.complaints@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

Other ways of complaining

Your Local Councillor
You may ask your local councillor to take up the matter. However, for more serious complaints, they will probably suggest that you use the procedure within this booklet. You can find out who your Councillor is on the Council’s website or by telephoning 01344 352000.

Will my complaint remain confidential?

We want you to feel comfortable about making a complaint about Council services. Your complaint is personal to you, and your name, address and details of your complaint will remain confidential to the Council employees who are carrying out the investigation, or, if the service is provided by another organisation on behalf of the council, details may be shared with that organisation if that is necessary to deal with your complaint.

If you believe that we have not handled your personal information in an acceptable way, you should first write to:

The Information Compliance Officer, Legal Services, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1AQ

Telephone: 01344 352000
The Information Commissioner

If you believe that you may have been affected by the way we have handled your personal data then you may write to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner is an independent authority that oversees and enforces compliance with both the Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Commissioner has the power to prosecute people who have committed an offence under this legislation.

The Information Commissioner may be contacted at:

Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545 745

Website: ico.gov.uk

Whistle-blowing

The Council has adopted a separate procedure to deal with situations where a member of staff, a contractor engaged by the Council or tendering for a contract to be awarded by the Council, or a member of staff employed by a contractor, wishes to draw to the attention of the Council some illegality, impropriety, breach of contract standing orders or financial regulations or something which places the Health and Safety of someone at risk. Concerns should be addressed to the Borough Solicitor at Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1AQ. Details of the procedure can be found on the Council’s website

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/whistleblowingpolicyandprocedure
The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct governing the conduct of its councillors. The Council has also adopted various other protocols relating to councillors, including a protocol on how councillors should conduct themselves in relation to planning applications. Complaints that a councillor has acted in breach of the Code of Conduct or a protocol are dealt with under a separate procedure and are usually determined by the Council’s Standards Committee. Any person wishing to make such a complaint should contact the Borough Solicitor at Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1AQ. Further information is available on the Council’s website www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your complaint is about</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Building Control</td>
<td>Director of Environment, Culture &amp; Communities</td>
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<td>Car Parks (for parking enforcement please use the appropriate appeals process)</td>
<td>Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1JD</td>
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<td>Cemetery and Crematorium</td>
<td>Telephone: 01344 352000</td>
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<td>Environmental Health</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk">customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td>E+ Card</td>
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<td>Grounds maintenance</td>
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<td>Highways</td>
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<td>Libraries</td>
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<td>Licensing</td>
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<td>Parks &amp; Countryside</td>
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<td>Pest Control</td>
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<td>Planning (for appeals or reports of breaches, please use the appropriate process)</td>
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<td>Public conveniences</td>
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<td>Refuse collection and recycling</td>
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<td>Footpaths, cycleways and bridleways</td>
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<td>Sports, Leisure and recreation facilities</td>
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<td>Street cleaning</td>
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<td>Trading standards</td>
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<td>If your complaint is about</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business rates</td>
<td>Director of Corporate Services</td>
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<td>Communications</td>
<td>Easthampstead House</td>
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<td>Community Centres</td>
<td>Town Square</td>
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<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>Bracknell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council democratic functions and meetings</td>
<td>Berkshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Property (non-residential)</td>
<td>RG12 1AQ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council tax</td>
<td>Telephone: 01344 352000</td>
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<td>Customer Services</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk">customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td>Education transport</td>
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<td>Elections and electoral registration</td>
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<td>Finance</td>
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<td>Human Resources and training</td>
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<td>ICT functions</td>
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<td>Legal</td>
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<td>Neighbourhood forums</td>
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<td>Registration of births, marriages and deaths</td>
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<td>Responses to Freedom of Information Act requests</td>
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<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Director of Adult Social Care, Health and</td>
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<td>Council Property (residential)</td>
<td>Housing</td>
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<td>Housing</td>
<td>Time Square</td>
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<td>Forest Care</td>
<td>Market Street</td>
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<td>Public Health</td>
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| Education (please note the special arrangements on page 9)  
A particular school  
Other education services  
Youth Services | Head teacher of the school concerned  
Time Square  
Market Street  
Bracknell  
Berkshire  
RG12 1JD  
Telephone: 01344 352000  
Email: education.complaints@bracknell-forest.gov.uk |
| Adult or Children’s Social Care (please note the special arrangements on page 9)  
Adult Social Care | The Complaints Manager  
Adult Social Care, Time Square,  
Market Street, Bracknell RG12 1JD  
Telephone: 01344 351736  
Email: asc.complaints@bracknell-forest.gov.uk |
| Children’s Social Care | The Complaints Manager  
Children’s Social Care  
Time Square  
Bracknell RG12 1JD  
Telephone: 01344 351737  
Email: childrens.servicescomplaints@bracknell-forest.gov.uk |

If you are not sure about where to complain, please contact Customer Services at customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk or telephone 01344 352000.
Comments, compliments or complaint form

Your name: ...........................................................................................................
Your address: .....................................................................................................
.......................................................................................................................
Postcode: .........................................................................................................
Daytime telephone number: .............................................................................
Email: ..............................................................................................................
Please provide us with details of your comments or complaint: ....................
.......................................................................................................................
.......................................................................................................................
If you are making a complaint, have you suffered any harm or loss as a result? If so, please provide details: ............................................................... 
.......................................................................................................................
What do you think the Council should do now to put things right? ............... 
....................................................................................................................... 
....................................................................................................................... 
Have you written or spoken to anyone at the Council about this matter before? If so, please provide details ............................................................... 
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Signed ......................................................Date.............................................
If there is not enough room, please use extra sheets of paper. If you have any documents that relate to your complaint, please send copies with this form.
Confidential

How do we make sure that we treat everyone fairly?

We recognise and value all of the people in Bracknell Forest and want to make sure that everyone may access our services. The following information we ask for below will only be used to compile statistics for use in monitoring the complaints procedure or improving the delivery of the Council’s services. Please note that this information is optional either completely or in part.

Are you: Male ☐ Female ☐

Under 18 ☐ 18-34 ☐ 35-49 ☐ 50-64 ☐ 65-79 ☐ 80+ ☐

To which of these groups do you consider you belong? (PLEASE ☑ ONE BOX ONLY)

White
British ☐ Irish ☐ Gypsy/Traveller ☐ Showpeople/Circus ☐
Any other White background ☐ (☑ AND WRITE IN) .....................................

Black or Black British
Caribbean ☐ African ☐ Any other Black background ☐ (☑ AND WRITE IN) ..................................

Asian or Asian British
Indian ☐ Pakistani ☐ Nepali ☐ Bangladeshi ☐
Any other Asian background ☐ (☑ AND WRITE IN) ..................................

Mixed
White and Black Caribbean ☐ White and Black African ☐ White and Asian ☐
Any other Mixed background ☐ (☑ AND WRITE IN) ..................................

Chinese
Chinese ☐ Filipino ☐
Any other ethnic group ☐ (☑ AND WRITE IN) ..................................

Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? (Long-standing means anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time) PLEASE ☑ ONE BOX ONLY

Yes ☐ No ☐

Does the illness or disability limit your activities in any way? PLEASE ☑ ONE BOX ONLY

Yes ☐ No ☐

How would you describe your religion/belief? PLEASE ☑ ONE BOX ONLY

None ☐ Christian (all Christian denominations) ☐ Buddhist ☐ Hindu ☐
Muslim ☐ Sikh ☐ Jewish ☐
Any other religion or belief ☐ (please specify) ..................................

How would you describe your sexual orientation? PLEASE ☑ ONE BOX ONLY

Heterosexual/straight ☐ Gay man ☐ Lesbian/gay woman ☐
Bisexual ☐ Prefer not to say ☐

Thank you for completing this form
Copies of this booklet may be obtained in large print, Braille, on audio cassette or in other languages. To obtain a copy in an alternative format please telephone 01344 352000.