



Peterlee Town Council Complaints Procedure

SUMMARY

This complaints procedure has been adapted from the national model Town & Parish Council complaints procedure published by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). The model is based on the guidance on handling complaints produced by the Local Government Ombudsman. This document sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we shall go about resolving your complaint.

Ian Morris, Chief Officer & Town Clerk

Reviewed & Approved May 2023

Complaints Procedure

First adopted April 2017, reviewed & approved by full Council May 2023

1. Peterlee Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in the Peterlee area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration, procedures and services and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.
3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
 - 3.1. complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
 - 3.2. complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council in 2021 and if a complaint against a councillor is received by the Town council it will be referred to the Standards Committee of Durham County Council in line with this policy. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Durham County Council here: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/ethicalstandards> or by contacting the Committee's Support Officer on 03000 269 703
4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed, or by contacting your local Town Council ward member. You can find out who your local ward members are via the Town Council's website here: <http://www.peterlee.gov.uk/councillors/>

Town Council meeting agendas are published at least 3 days before all of our meetings here: <http://www.peterlee.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/>

There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. This section usually occurs between 6.30pm – 6.45pm at full Council meetings.
5. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but [Standing Orders](#) prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

6. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures, services or administration to the Town Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk:

Ian Morris, Town Clerk 0191 586 2491

clerk@peterlee.gov.uk

Peterlee Town Council, Shotton Hall, Old Shotton, Peterlee SR8 2PH

7. Wherever possible, the Town Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately and without referring to the formal procedure. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days and will instigate the formal procedure.
8. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will liaise with the Clerk in resolving your complaint:

Cllr Audrey Laing c/o Peterlee Town Council, Shotton Hall, Peterlee SR8 2PH

(0191) 71600775 audrey.laing1947@icloud.com

9. If the formal procedure is invoked you will be asked to put your complaint in writing, either on paper or by email. You must submit your name, address and either a telephone or email address where you can be contacted. The Town Clerk will investigate your complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council (as appropriate).
10. The Clerk will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)
11. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Appeals Committee of the Town Council. This referral will be made by the Clerk or Chairman of the Council at their discretion and the result of the referral will be reported to full Council. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint, usually within 8 weeks of the complaint, although this period may be extended in exceptional circumstances.
12. If the complaint is about the Town Clerk, the Chairman of the Council will manage the process for the complaint in conjunction with another suitable officer, most probably a Senior Officer from Durham County Council.
13. Some disputes may need to be handled outside of this complaints procedure, for instance where legal proceedings are involved or where a claim for compensation is made that we need to refer to our insurers. If this is the case the Town Clerk will seek legal advice before advising you of the process to be followed.