

**STROUD
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Have you made a complaint?

What happens now...



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About us....

Tenant Services is committed to providing our community with high quality services and we want to know if we have got something wrong so that we can put things right. If you are not happy with the quality of the service you receive, or the way you are treated by our staff or our contractors, you have the **right to complain**.



We aim to build on our reputation as an organisation of choice and excellence, ensuring we use complaints as the drivers to deliver improvements that our community wants. Therefore, where you have influenced changes to policy and improvements to services, we will **publish our findings**.



Providing excellent customer service is one of our main objectives and we aim to put the needs and aspirations of our customers at the heart of everything we do. Our corporate complaints policy is underpinned and complimented by our service standards.



Our Service Standards

Customer Care

We will treat everyone politely, fairly and professionally because we value and respect you.

Equality and Diversity

We recognise and respect the diverse needs of our community, and will adapt our services to meet your individual needs.

Rent and Income Collection

We will support you if you have difficulty paying your rent or service charges.

Anti-Social Behaviour

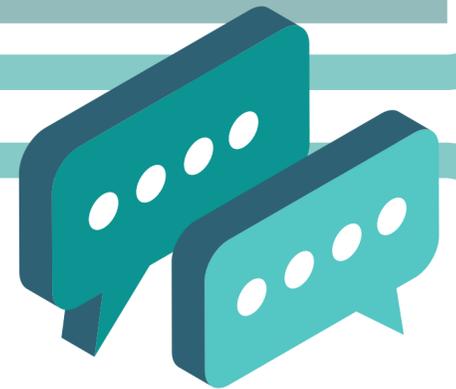
We will work together with other agencies to help tackle problems experienced by individuals, families and communities.

Estate Management

We will deliver an estate management service to help you live in homes and places you are proud of.

Repairs and Maintenance

We will provide a service that achieves high standards of quality, safety and satisfaction to ensure that all of our homes are of a good standard.



Customer Care principles

We also support the following customer care principles:

Helpful



We will aim to get it right first time and keep you updated until your enquiry is resolved

We will treat you fairly, apologise if we get things wrong, and protect your privacy

Fair and honest



Friendly and understanding



We will be polite, listen to you, and be positive

We will provide clear information, ensure it is in an accessible format, and provide assistance if you need it

Accessible to everyone

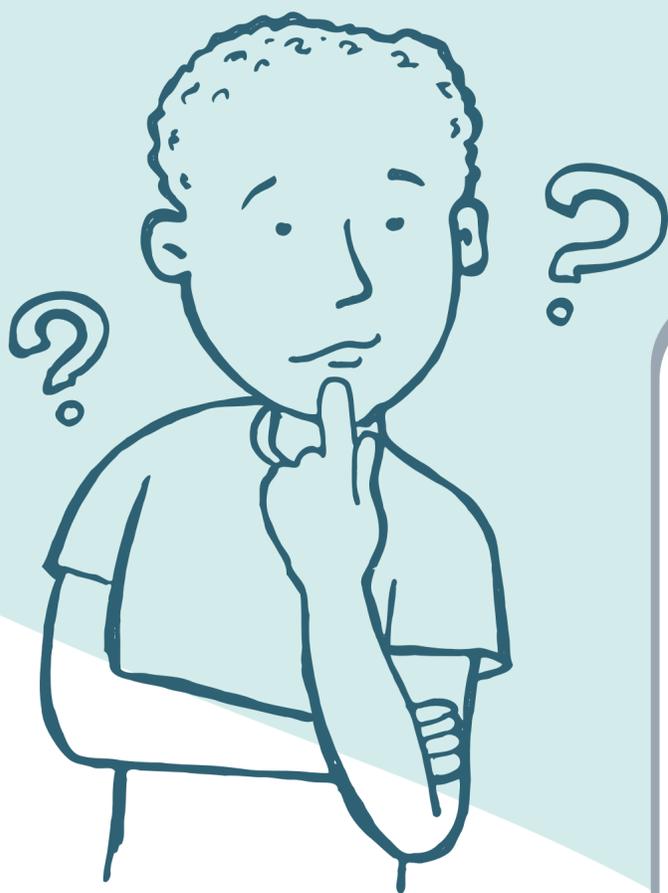


Is it a

Complaint

Or

Service Request



Service requests and **complaints** are slightly different. It is important that we understand at the outset whether your dissatisfaction about a particular service is a complaint or a service request.

A service request is a contact from a customer that brings a matter to the Council's attention for the first time, for example, if you report your neighbours for making a noise.

A complaint is where a customer expresses dissatisfaction about the standard of a service, actions, or lack of actions by the council and its staff. So, for example, if you report your neighbours for making a noise and we fail to investigate it, then we would handle this as a complaint.

Stroud District Council defines a complaint as

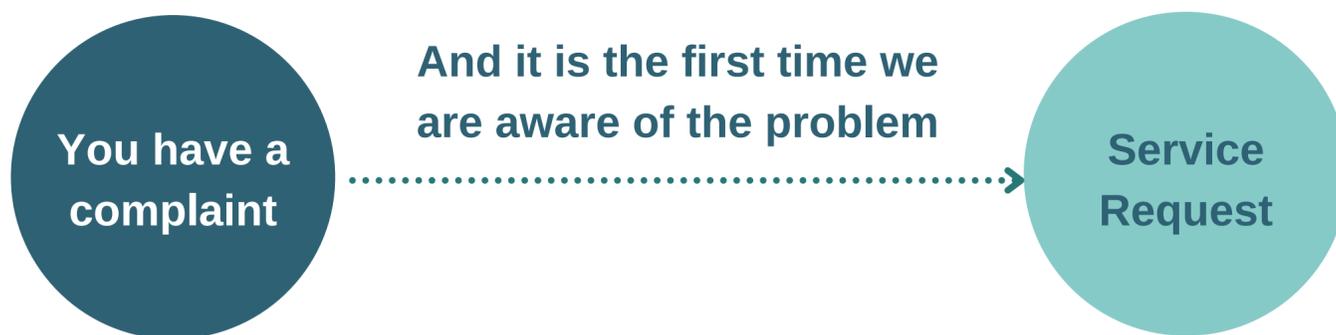
"An expression of dissatisfaction about the Council's action, lack of action, or standard of service, or staff, which the service user wishes to be treated as a complaint".

Service Requests

Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straightforward customer complaints that require little or no investigation. This means resolving the complaint at the first point of contact.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received from us or one of our contractors, you should contact us to express your initial dissatisfaction. An officer from the relevant service area will investigate and try to resolve the issue to your satisfaction.

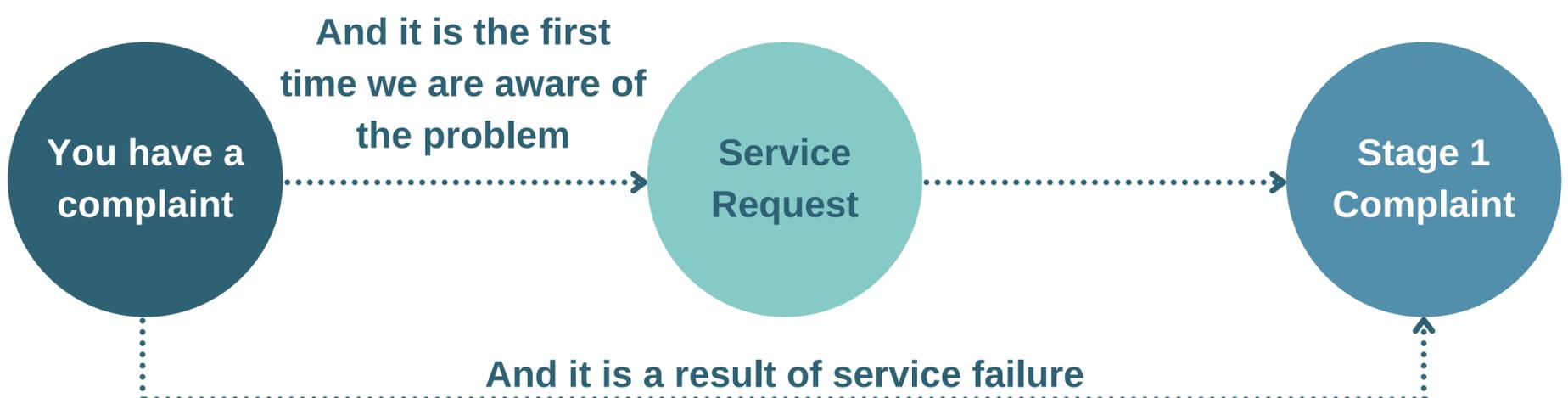
If you remain unhappy with the resolution offered at this stage, you can escalate your complaint to **Stage 1**.



Stage 1 Complaints

Once your complaint is received, we will register it, acknowledge it and allocate it to an independent officer for investigation. The investigating officer will keep you updated throughout the investigation process, and you will receive a full response within 10 working days from the date the complaint is received. If this is not possible, we will keep you informed of progress and let you know how long we think the investigation will take to conclude.

If you remain unhappy with the resolution offered at this stage, you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed at **Stage 2**.



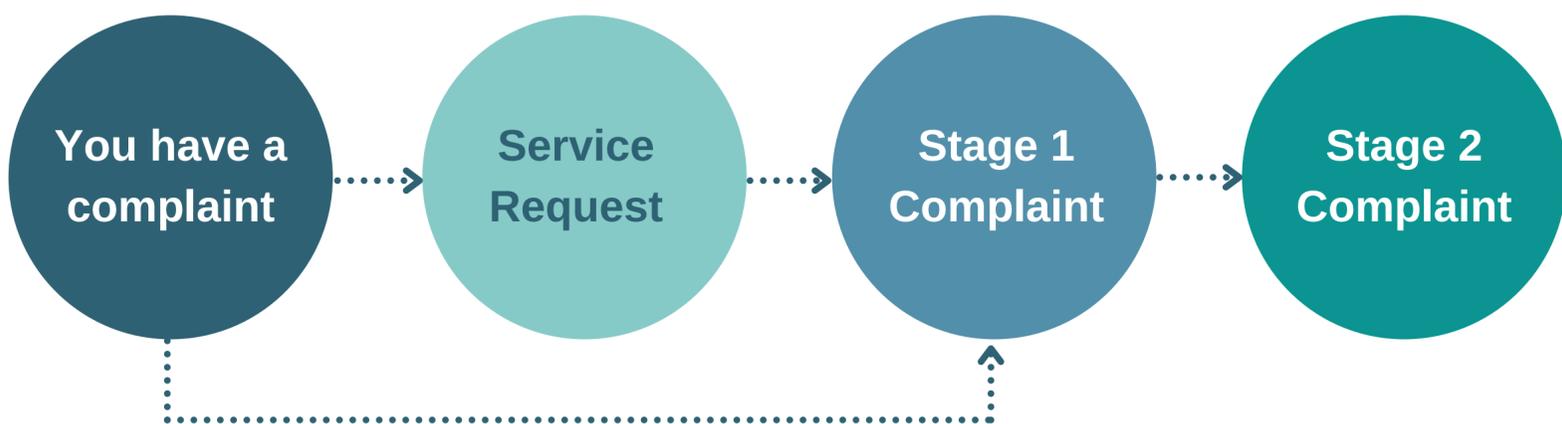
Stage 2 Complaints

You can ask for your complaint to be dealt with under Stage 2 in the following circumstances:

- Where we have had adequate opportunity to address your complaint, but we have not provided you with a response within the timescale, or any longer period agreed with you; or
- If you do not consider that your complaint has received adequate or proper consideration, or you have received a response and you remain dissatisfied.

You will need to tell us why you remain dissatisfied and give us reasons why you believe that the issues were not addressed at Stage 1. You will also need to tell us what you would like as an outcome from your complaint.

Your complaint will be allocated to a Head of Service for review, and you will receive a full response within 20 working days. If this is not possible, we will tell you the reason for the delay and when we will be able to respond.

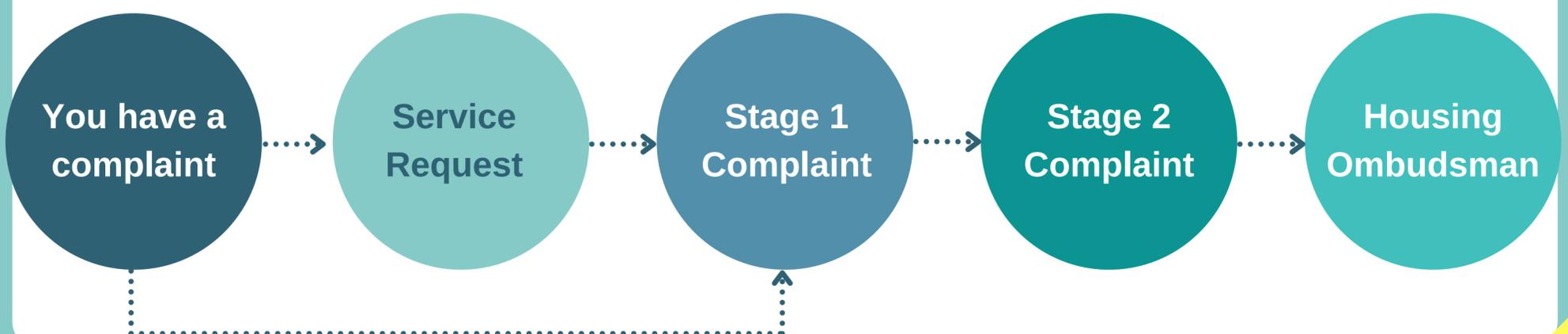


Housing Ombudsman



If you are unable to resolve your complaint through our complaints procedure, you can contact a designated person who can also help find a solution. This can be an MP, a local councillor or a Tenant Panel. If they cannot help, they can refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman on your behalf.

Alternatively, if you have decided not to contact a designated person, you can register your complaint with the Housing Ombudsman **8 weeks** after you have received the response to your Stage 2 complaint.



Extensions to our timeline

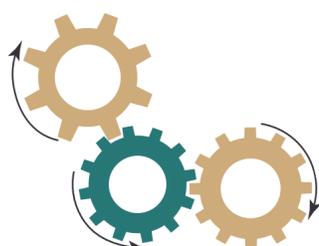
Not all investigations will be able to meet our deadlines.



For example, some complaints are so complex that they require careful consideration and detailed investigation beyond the 10 or 20-day time limits.



However, these are exceptional circumstances and the investigating officer will keep you updated on the reason for the delay and agree with you a revised timescale for completion.



The resolution process

We acknowledge that sometimes we get things wrong or don't meet the high levels of service that our community expects. We want to ensure that we resolve any dissatisfaction or complaints as quickly as possible.

Our complaints resolution process adheres to the principles outlined in the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which was introduced in July 2020. A copy of this can be found on our website.

Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve customer satisfaction, as they help us understand how our service is performing and may also prevent the same problems that led to the complaint from happening again.

For our staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of the customer's views and experience, can highlight problems we may otherwise miss, and where we can take steps to improve the services we provide to you.

A summary of the complaints process

You have a complaint

If this is the first time we have been made aware of your issue, we will handle it as a **service request**. However, if it is the result of service failure then we will handle it as a **Stage 1 complaint**.

Service Request

An officer from the relevant service area will handle your enquiry and provide you with a response within 10 working days. If you are satisfied with the outcome, your service request will be closed. If you remain unhappy after receiving the response, you can escalate it to a **Stage 1 Complaint**.

Stage 1 Complaint

Your complaint will be registered at Stage 1 and allocated to an independent officer to investigate. They will provide you with a response within 10 working days.

Stage 2 complaint

A Head of Service will be allocated your complaint and will review the investigation carried out at Stage 1. A response outlining the outcome of the review will be sent to you within 20 working days.

If you are unhappy with the handling or outcome of your Stage 2 complaint then you can either contact a designated person, or register your complaint with the **Housing Ombudsman** 8 weeks after you have received the response to your Stage 2 complaint.

Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman will independently review all the documentation regarding your Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints, and will provide a final decision on the matter.

Your complaint is resolved

We aim to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible and ensure you are satisfied with the outcome. However, if your complaint is escalated to the Housing Ombudsman, the final outcome decision will be issued by them.

