



LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON

Public Health Complaints procedure

Revised 11 June 2013

Contents	Page number(s)
1. Introduction	3
2. Principles	3
3. Aims	3
4. Who can make a complaint?	4
5. What can you complain about?	4
6. How to complain?	4 - 5
7. Complaints that we cannot deal with.	5
8. How we will deal with your complaint?	5 - 6
9. If you are not satisfied	6
10. Learning from Complaints	6
Appendix 1 – Services which are covered by Hillingdon’s Public Health Functions under the Health and Social Care Act 2012	7

Public Health Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure should ensure that all complaints received by the Council regarding its public health functions are handled in accordance with The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangement Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012. It should also ensure that any such complaints are handled in a manner that upholds the principles of good complaints handling set out by the Local Government Ombudsman.

2. Principles

The procedure is about putting the customer and/or their representative at the centre of efforts to resolve the issues they have raised. We recognise the importance of listening to our customers' experiences and views about our service, particularly if they are unhappy. We want to make it as easy as possible for them to let us know their views. The procedures will ensure that representations and complaints are dealt with in a way that is:

- open – information gathered about the issues raised and the way in which they have been handled will be shared fully with the customer in a sensitive and appropriate way;
- clear – the details of the complaint and the way in which it will be handled will be agreed at the start with the complainant;
- responsive – the needs of the complainant/service user will be taken into account in determining the way their concerns will be addressed;
- flexible – the way we deal with the complaint will be determined by the nature of the complaint and will be:
 - proportionate – the efforts to resolve and time taken in addressing the issues raised will reflect the significance of those issues;
 - accessible – the procedure will be easy to access and use;
 - timely – complaints will be handled in a reasonable timescale rather than solely to preset timescales;
 - resolution focussed – we will focus on reasonable resolution at all points in the process.

3. Aims

We aim to respond appropriately to expressions of dissatisfaction about the exercise of the Council's public health functions and learn from complaints in a way that drives improvements in delivering those functions. In order to do this, the Council will record and monitor complaints and data gathered when handling complaints.

Where we receive complaints that relate to the Council's and another organisation's exercise of public health functions we will work appropriately with that other organisation to ensure that responses and any necessary service improvement are effectively co-ordinated.

4. Who can make a complaint?

You can make a complaint if:

- you receive or have received services which fall within the public health functions of the Council, or if you represent someone who has received such a service;
- you are affected or likely to be affected by the action/inaction or decision of the Council in respect of a service which is with the public health functions of the Council, or if you represent someone who is affected or likely to be affected by such an action/inaction or decision.

If you are a representative, the Council may need to seek assurance that you are acting in the best interests of the person you are representing (for example, if you represent a child or someone who is mentally incapacitated).

5. What can you complain about?

You can complain about anything that is connected with the way the Council exercises its public health function(s) – whether that happens directly or through an external service provider. For example, the types of complaint we can deal with might relate to:

- quality of the service provision;
- charges for a service;
- decisions;
- failure to follow correct procedures;
- delays;
- service not being provided
- application of assessment and eligibility criteria;
- attitude or behaviour of staff;
- the impact of a policy.

If you wish to make a complaint, you should do so as soon as possible after you become aware of the matter that you are complaining about. We will normally only be able to consider your complaint if you complained within 12 months of the issues you are complaining about.

See Appendix 1 for the services covered

6. How to complain

You can make a complaint in the following ways:

- telephone the Complaints and Service Improvement Team on 01895 277335 (we will make a written note of your complaint and may ask you to agree this);
- write to the Complaints and Service Improvement Team, Hillingdon Council, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1UW;

- email us at complaintsmailbox@hillingdon.gov.uk.
- complete an online form at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/.....

When you complain, please tell us clearly what you are complaining about and what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint. It is also helpful if you can tell us your full contact details and confirm whether you are content for us to contact you by email (if you have email).

If you need help to make your complaint or need more information about our procedures, the Complaints and Service Improvement Team will be very happy to help.

If you are representing or assisting another person to make a complaint, we may ask the person you are representing to send us a letter authorising them to act on your behalf.

7. Complaints that we cannot deal with

We will not deal with the following types of complaint under this procedure:

- complaints made by other bodies that are responsible for public health England;
- complaints about employment matters (or pensions) from Council or other public health providers' employees (or former employees);
- complaints that have been investigated previously under this procedure;
- complaints that are being or have already been investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman;
- complaints relating to the way requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 have been handled.

If we cannot deal with your complaint within this procedure, we will let you know in writing (either by post or, with your consent, by email) as soon as possible.

8. How we will deal with your complaint

If we can deal with your complaint within this procedure, the Complaints and Service Improvement Team will acknowledge the complaint within three working days and ask you to consent to our corresponding with you by email (if you have email). We may also ask you to contact us to confirm the details of your complaint and agree a reasonable timescale for us to respond.

Depending on the nature of your complaint we may ask for your consent to pass information about your complaint to an outside service provider to enable that organisation to respond to your complaint directly or provide us with information so that we can respond to your complaint fully.

We will investigate your complaint and the Director of Public Health will provide a full response within the timescale we agree with you. We usually

aim to provide a full response within six months or, exceptionally, longer. However, if we think that it will take as long as this, we will certainly ask to discuss this with you and give you clear reasons why it will take so long in writing.

9. If you are still dissatisfied

If you remain unhappy with the response that you receive from the Director of Public Health, please contact the Complaints and Service Improvement Team to discuss your concerns further. It might be that there is something straightforward that can be done to resolve any outstanding points. However, it is open to you to contact the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The LGO investigate complaints that individuals have been treated unfairly or have received poor service from government departments, other public organisations and the NHS in England. The address for the LGO is PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH. More information on the role of the LGO can be found on the following website: www.lgo.org.uk.

10. Learning from complaints

When the Director of Public Health has given their full response to your complaint, the Complaints and Service Improvement Team will keep a record of any failures or possible service improvements that have come to light during the of the complaint. They will also take steps to ensure any necessary improvements are drawn to the attention of Managers within the Team, and that steps are taken to make necessary improvements wherever possible.

The Complaints and Service Improvement Team will provide monthly and quarterly statistical information about complaints that relate to the Council's public health functions to the Director of Public Health. There will be an annual report which includes statistical information, analysis and progress on service improvements.

Appendix 1

Services which are covered by Hillingdon's Public Health Functions under the Health and Social Care Act 2012

Commissioning of Mandated Services:

This includes:

- Sexual Health Services;
- NHS Health Checks; and
- National Child Measurement Programme.

Other Commissioning Responsibilities:

There are a range of other commissioning responsibilities that include **Prevention and Lifestyle services** such as:

- Tobacco control and smoking cessation services;
- Alcohol and drug misuse services;
- Public health services for children and young people aged 5 – 19;
- Interventions to tackle obesity such as community lifestyle and weight management services;
- Locally-led nutrition initiatives;
- Increasing levels of physical activity in the local population;
- Public mental health services;
- Dental public health services;
- Accidental injury prevention;
- Population level interventions to reduce and prevent birth defects;
- Behavioural and lifestyle campaigns to prevent cancer and long term conditions; and
- Local initiatives on workplace health