



Complaints Policy

Duston Parish Council



Duston Parish Council Complaints Policy

The Council aims to provide a high-quality service.

Sometimes, however, things go wrong or there are misunderstandings about what the Council can or cannot do. If you make a complaint, the Council guarantees:

- Action to resolve your complaint
- An apology if the service has not been up to standard
- A full written response

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service - whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council.

How to Complain

A member of staff will try to resolve a complaint informally in the first instance.

If you wish to pursue the complaint formally then the matter must be referred to the Parish Clerk which can be done by making an appointment at the Council Offices, or in writing by letter or email (contact details below).

We will acknowledge your complaint in 5 working days and resolve it within 21 working days.

Some types of complaint cannot always be dealt with by the Council itself and may need to be referred elsewhere. Such instances are -

- *Financial irregularity:* Local electors have the statutory right to object to the Council's audit of accounts pursuant to The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. On other matters the Council may need to consult the appropriate auditor.
- *Criminal activity:* Matters will be referred to the Police.
- *Member conduct:* Complaints against Councillors which are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council. Any complaint that a Councillor may have breached the Council's adopted code of conduct should be referred to the Monitoring Officer at West Northamptonshire Council.

- *Employee conduct.* This will be dealt with through the Council's Internal HR policies and procedures.

Appeals Procedure

Unlike for West Northamptonshire Council, there is currently no external agency or government body which can investigate a complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the initial consideration of your complaint, you may address an appeal to the Chair of Duston Parish Council. The Chair will review the complaint and if he/she believes it appropriate, the complaint will be submitted to Council for consideration. To preserve any confidentiality issues, the Council may appoint a 3 member complaints Sub-Committee, who will deal with your complaint in private session and confidential matters will not therefore be published. The Council or Complaints Sub Committee will notify you of their decision within 6 working days. The decision of the Council or the Complaints Sub-Committee will be final.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints should be referred to the Parish Clerk and may be acted on at his/her discretion, according to the type and seriousness of the allegation.

Vexatious and Repeated Complaints

There will be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to proceed when it clearly has no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other process, whether through the courts or some other recognised procedure, should or has been taken.

These matters should be referred to the Clerk with a summary of the issues and of the attempts made to resolve the complaint. The Clerk, in consultation with Chair of the Council (or Vice-Chair in their absence), may decide that no further action can usefully be taken in response to the complainant, and inform the complainant so, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.

Contact Details

Parish Clerk,
Duston Community Centre,
Pendle Road, NN5 6DT
clerk@duston-pc.gov.uk
01604 583626