

# Complaints Policy

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## ***1. Introduction***

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We are committed to providing high-quality services for all members of the public, businesses and organisations. We welcome our customers' views and will use them to improve our services.

This policy describes how we will deal with complaints and the role of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

## ***2. Aims of the Complaints Policy***

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Our complaints policy aims to ensure that customers:

- (a) know where and how to complain to us
- (b) receive an acknowledgement and information on progress of their complaint
- (c) receive an appropriate response and action is taken where we have failed to provide a satisfactory service.

We are committed to treating all our customers fairly and equally.

We will use complaints to review and improve the way we provide services.

If you wish to make an appointment to discuss a complaint, please contact the Monitoring Officer by email at:

[democratic.services@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)

## ***3. What is a complaint?***

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A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority provides.

There are some complaints that will not be dealt with under this policy such as:

- (a) Where legal processes are involved – where a legal challenge is being made regarding whether a decision or action is lawful;
- (b) Where there is a more appropriate individual or organisation to deal with your complaint, such as a tribunal, Ombudsman or another local organisation or council;
- (c) We would not normally deal with complaints about something that happened more than a year ago;

- (d) Complaints about members of the Combined Authority – elected councillors have a separate complaints process and the Monitoring Officer can advise you about this;
- (e) Whistleblowing policy – there is a separate policy relating to whistleblowing;
- (f) Complaints about Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. We have a separate policy for these types of complaints.

#### **4. How do I make a complaint? – Choosing the correct organisation**

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Before raising a complaint to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), you should ensure that you have raised the complaint with the correct organisation.

- (a) The CPCA has not replaced existing local authorities; there are seven individual councils in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area who deliver the vast majority of services for your community
- (b) The CPCA is separate from the Greater Cambridge Partnership (formerly called the “City Deal”)
- (c) The CPCA does not handle complaints related to handling of personal data protected by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

If you have a complaint that does not directly relate to an activity carried out by the CPCA, you should submit your complaint to the appropriate Council; Local Enterprise Partnership or transport company/organisation.

##### ***a. Transport and Street Matters***

If you have a complaint about any transport services or street related matter, please contact the local authority for your area.

##### Highways

Peterborough City Council

Website: <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/contact-us/>

Cambridgeshire County Council

Website: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/contact-us/>

Street matters (i.e. refuse collections, environmental services, licensing)

Cambridge City Council

Website: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/contact-us>

East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Website: <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/content/contact-us>

Fenland District Council  
Website: <https://www.fenland.gov.uk/contactus>

Huntingdonshire District Council  
Website: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/contact-us>

Peterborough City Council  
Website: <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/contact-us/>

South Cambridgeshire District Council  
Website: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/the-council/ways-to-contact-us/>

***b. Greater Cambridge Partnership***

If you have a complaint about the Greater Cambridge Partnership, please contact

Greater Cambridge Partnership,  
PO Box 1493  
Mandela House  
Cambridge,  
CB3 0AP

Email: [contactus@greatercambridge.org.uk](mailto:contactus@greatercambridge.org.uk)  
Telephone: 01223 699906  
<https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/>

***c. Business Board of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (formerly the Greater Cambridgeshire/ Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership)***

If you have a complaint about the Business Board of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, please contact:

Monitoring Officer, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 3TN

Submit a complaint via the [Contact us - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)

Or  
Write to Complaints, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined  
Authority, c/o Monitoring Officer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Pathfinder House, St  
Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 3TN

#### **d. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

If you have a complaint related to the handling of your personal data, please  
contact the UK's supervisory authority for GDPR:

The Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire

Telephone: 0303 123 1113  
Website: <https://www.ico.org.uk/concerns>

The Combined Authority has a Data Protection policy which can be viewed here:  
[Data Protection | The Combined Authority \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-  
ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/Data-Protection)

#### **5. How do I make a complaint? Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority**

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The Combined Authority will take a proportionate approach to the assessment,  
investigation and review of complaints; and has an initial two-stage policy.

It is expected that all complaints received will be treated in confidence. There  
may be rare instances, however, where to preserve the fairness of the  
complaints procedure, we might need to contact the complainant to ascertain  
their willingness to share identity with those subject to or involved in the  
complaint. This would never be done without the complainants express  
agreement.

Where a complainant publicizes the facts and details of a complaint during the  
course of the investigation, the Monitoring Officer (in consultation with the Chair  
of the Audit and Governance Committee) may conclude that the balance of the  
public interest lies in treating the identity of the complainant as no longer  
confidential.

## Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated, and will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances where the Monitoring Officer (in consultation with the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee) concludes that the balance of the public interest lies in doing so, and the fairness of the procedure is maintained.

### Step One - Informal Complaint

We will try to deal with your complaint informally. This means that you should phone or take your complaint to the office or person who dealt with your enquiry. Our staff will do their best to settle your complaint without you needing to do anything else.

### Step Two - Formal Complaint

If you have spoken to our staff about your complaint but they have not been able to put things right, or you are not happy with the result, the next step is for you to make a formal complaint in writing to the Monitoring Officer:

You can make a complaint (or compliment) using one of the following ways. You can:

- Submit a complaint via the [Contact us - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
- write to Complaints, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, c/o Monitoring Officer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 3TN

When you contact us, please give us your name and address - including your postcode - and your phone number. If you prefer, you can ask a friend or relative to speak or write to us for you.

The Monitoring Officer will ask a Director to investigate your complaint. If we cannot resolve your complaint immediately, we will write to you within three working days to let you know we have received your complaint. We will give you a reference number and let you know that your complaint is being investigated.

This information will make it easier for you to contact the person dealing with your complaint if you need to.

The Director will:

- investigate your complaint;
- take any necessary action; and
- make sure they send a written reply within 15 working days.

If your complaint needs more investigation, and we cannot send you a written reply within 15 working days, we will write to you and let you know when you will receive a written reply.

### ***Step Three - Complaint Review***

If you have been through steps one and two of the complaints procedure and you are still not happy with the results of the investigations, you can write to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (see 7, below).

## ***6. Points to note***

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Most complaints will be dealt with through these procedures without difficulty. However, in order that the Combined Authority deals with complaints in a way that is demonstrably consistent and fair the complaints procedures should acknowledge complaints may be withdrawn. The procedures should also explain how the Combined Authority might deal with unreasonably persistent complainants or other unreasonable behaviour by complainants. There should be an acknowledgement of organisational learning following complaints.

### ***Withdrawing a Complaint***

A complainant may withdraw their complaint at any time. The relevant Director will consider whether, or not the issue of concern requires further consideration under appropriate internal management review systems.

### ***Persistent and Unreasonable Complaints***

The Combined Authority is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. However, there are occasions when contact from a complainant becomes too frequent or complex, so that it hinders our consideration of their complaints, or those made by other people.

The Combined Authority does not expect its staff to tolerate behaviour by complainants which is unacceptable, abusive, offensive or threatening, and will take action to protect staff from such behaviour. The term 'persistent and unreasonable complainant' broadly applies to those customers who are aggressive or have demonstrated abusive behaviour as well as those who make

unreasonable demands or become unreasonably persistent with vexatious complaints. In such cases we may take action to limit the contact the complainant has with us.

Customers to whom this policy may apply include those who:

- Refuse to accept the remit of the process to be undertaken as described to them
- Request action that is not compatible with the process or make unreasonable demands
- Introduce unrelated additional information and expect it to be taken into account
- Make excessive contact with staff
- Submit habitual complaints about issues that have been previously dealt with
- Engage with staff in a manner which is deemed unacceptable or inappropriate
- Refuse to adhere to previously agreed communication plans
- Behave in a threatening or abusive manner, having been previously advised it is not acceptable

In all cases, the Combined Authority will write to tell the complainant why it believes the behaviour is unacceptable; what action the Council will be taking; the duration of that action; and how, and when it will be reviewed. The complainant will also be informed as to how to challenge the decision if they disagree with it. However, in cases of extreme behaviour, which threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, the Combined Authority will consider other options, for example escalating the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, the complainant may not, necessarily, get prior warning of the action.

### *Learning from Complaints*

Listening to feedback about our services can identify potential service problems and affords us the opportunity of putting things right. The Combined Authority is determined to learn from complaints and any changes that we can make to help or prevent a recurrence and improve our service at any point in the process, will be highlighted and acted upon.

Through Annual Reporting to the Audit & Governance Committee of the Combined Authority the trends and themes of complaints can be identified in public forum. The Annual Complaints report will include:

- The number of complaints received
- The outcome of complaints (e.g. the proportion upheld)
- Complaint themes and trends



- What the Combined Authority has learnt from complaints and the changes made as a result
- Compliments, and example compliments – such as quotes

## ***7. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman***

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The Ombudsman has a statutory responsibility for investigating complaints of maladministration about local authorities. However, the Ombudsman will usually only consider a complaint after it has completed the Authority's complaints procedure. At the end of stage two, complainants are advised of their rights to progress their complaint to the Ombudsman should they remain dissatisfied.

While the Ombudsman can investigate complaints about how the Authority has done something, they would not normally question what an Authority has done simply because someone does not agree with it.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman can be contacted about your complaint at any time. However, the Ombudsman usually gives the Combined Authority the opportunity to investigate first.

You can contact the Local Government Ombudsman at:

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman  
PO Box 4771  
Coventry CV4 0EH

Phone: 0300 061 0614

Website: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

[How to Complain - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

[Complain to us by post - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

## ***8. Comments and suggestions***

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As well as learning from complaints, we want to know any comments or suggestions you may have that will help us improve our services. You can do this by telling a member of staff about your comment or suggestion. Alternatively put your comment or suggestion in writing: [contactus@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk](mailto:contactus@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)