

# Worcestershire Regulatory Services

*Supporting and protecting you*

## COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

### What is Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS)

Our Service was first created on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010 to deliver local authority Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing functions for the seven councils in Worcestershire but, in 2016, Worcestershire County Council left the partnership leaving service with the key Environmental Health and Licensing functions on of:

- Bromsgrove District Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Worcester City Council
- Wychavon District Council
- Wyre Forest District Council

The Service reports to a Joint Committee of these six authorities comprising two elected members from each council. It is not a separate legal entity and is best viewed as an extension of the six partner councils. The service continues to manage the County Council's Trading Standards service through contractual arrangements and delivers functions for other local authorities beyond the county borders.

### Let us know what you think

We want to hear from you if you've got a comment to make, whether it's good or bad about any of our services. We also want to hear your suggestions about how we can improve Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS). By asking for your feedback, we can make changes if we can, to make your contact with WRS as positive as it can be.

### How can you get in touch?

Email            wrsenquiries@worsregservices.gov.uk  
Phone            01905-822799 for the WRS duty team  
Write to        Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way,  
Kidderminster, Worcestershire. DY11 7WF  
In person        The majority of issues can initially be dealt with by telephone. If there is a need  
following this, officers will be happy to make an appointment to see you.  
Please note:    **for ALL TRADING STANDARDS matters, the Citizens Advice Consumer  
Service should be your first contact point on their dedicated number of  
03454-040506**

## **Do you want to make a suggestion?**

We welcome your feedback and encourage your comments or suggestions about our services. It may be that your suggestion helps to change the way a service is delivered.

## **Have we got it right?**

If you think we've done something well, we'd love to hear from you. We want to receive your feedback and use it to help us make improvements to our services. We will pass on all compliments to the service or member of staff concerned.

## **Do you feel we have got it wrong?**

We want to hear from you if you think we have:

- Done something wrong or badly
- Not done something we should have
- Treated you unfairly or unprofessionally
- Been too slow to act

## **What do we ask of you?**

If you want to make a complaint or pay us a compliment, please give us as much detail as possible about the service including dates, times and names of the people you dealt with if known.

If making a complaint, please also let us know what you would like us to do to put things right. Please include your name, address and contact details as we cannot deal with any anonymous complaints.

If you are making a complaint for someone else, you will need their permission first. In these cases, the response will be made to the customer and not to the representative unless permission from the customer has been obtained

Personal data will be kept anonymous in producing and sharing information about complaints with other services and partners unless they are matters that need to be addressed by another service within the partners councils or an external body, or there are criminal or safeguarding exceptions

In line with the policies of our partners, complaints will only be accepted if they are reported within 12 months of the incident occurring.

## **What can you expect from us?**

### **Informal Resolution**

We will try to resolve things quickly and informally where possible. Please make your complaint to the person dealing with the query or, if you are not happy to do this, through one of the routes outlined above. Many issues can be resolved with an explanation, action or apology. If you aren't satisfied, you can ask for your complaint to be escalated to the service's formal process.

### **Formal Stage One – full investigation**

We will acknowledge formal stage one complaints within 5 working days.

Your complaint will be dealt with by one of our Team Managers reviewed by the Director of Regulatory Services, who will ensure the matter is fully investigated.

You will get a full reply within ten working days or an explanation of progress to date if there are reasons why we are unable to complete the investigation within that time. If you are not happy with the result of the investigation, you can ask for your complaint to be progressed to the final stage.

### **Stage Two – Formal Review**

If the complaint is escalated to this stage, it will be referred to the nominated officer of the most appropriate council (Wychavon, Wyre Forest, Worcester City, Malvern Hills, Bromsgrove, or Redditch,) depending on the nature of your complaint and where you live.

WRS will advise you of who is dealing with this matter has been referred to and send you their contact details. The relevant council will review the full details of your complaint, and you will get a full response explaining the outcome within ten working days.

Every effort is made to keep within the above timescales but in the event of more complex enquiries, this might not be possible. If more time is needed before replying, you will be informed.

### **What isn't a complaint or covered by this procedure?**

This procedure is designed to receive compliments about WRS services you have received, or to make a complaint about services you have received, or activities undertaken by WRS. However, we are not able to deal with all issues under this process.

WRS is not directly responsible for matters of policy that have been set by individual councils, for example, licensing policy. Complaints regarding such matters i.e. detailed elements of policy, will be referred directly to that council for them to process. We will tell you if this is the case and provide you with details as to who the complaint has been referred to along with their contact details.

Complaints regarding the conduct of councillors should be referred to the relevant council's Monitoring Officer, who will investigate allegations of misconduct. Further information can be found on the relevant council's website.

Complaints about other people, for example regarding noise nuisance or products you've purchased will be dealt with as requests for service. Where a complaint alleges criminal conduct that falls outside of the remit of the service, this will be referred to a more appropriate body i.e. Police, HMRC.

Employment issues will be dealt with in accordance with our Host Authority's Personnel Handbook. Complaints concerning members of staff alleging misconduct will be dealt with, where appropriate through our disciplinary procedure, the outcome of which will remain confidential.

Where a complaint is regarding the conduct of one of our many partner organisations, we will forward any complaints regarding our partners or their services to the appropriate manager.

The law provides for a number of separate appeal or other statutory procedures for some actions that the local authority may take, for example:

- Statutory notice decisions,
- Decisions of licensing committees,

This list is not exhaustive and if your complaint falls under one of these separate legal routes, you will be given advice how to make your appeal.

Requests for information, either under Freedom of Information or Environmental Information Regulation requests, are dealt with under separate processes.

Anonymous Complaints – We will treat all feedback confidentially unless there are criminal or safeguarding exceptions. If complaints are received anonymously, we cannot investigate them under this procedure.

### **Dealing with unreasonably persistent complainants**

Unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants are those complainants who, because of the nature or frequency of their contacts with WRS, hinder the organisation's consideration of their, or other people's complaints. These are only a small minority of people.

If these vexatious or unreasonably persistent complaints affect our ability to do our work or provide a service to others, we will refer this matter to the appropriate individual council who will deal with this under their own policies for dealing with vexatious complaints.

### **Still not satisfied following a complaint?**

If you have followed this procedure but still think you've not been treated fairly, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman. This service is not run by us and is free of charge. The Ombudsman is there to deal with the way in which a decision is made, not with the merits of our decision.

You should be aware that the Ombudsman will not deal with complaints until they have exhausted the complaints process within the local authority.

Local Government Ombudsman  
PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH  
0845 602 1983 or 024 7682 1960

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