

## General Service Standards

### (ga) Investigation of Complaints

We will deal with complaints by:

1. Checking to see that a previous complaint by the complainant about the issue is not still current.
2. Logging the receipt of the complaint; [Urgent complaints immediately, non urgent within one working day]  
Note "Urgent" complaints are classed as dark smoke from commercial premises, nuisances causing a significant impact with at least two complaints from separate households in a 12 hour period, misfiring audible alarms, nuisances or emissions taking place in default of a notice, and serious environmental or health threatening issues.
3. Acknowledging the complaint and in appropriate circumstances send a "A Guide to our Services" leaflet ;
4. Responding to the complainant advising them on the legal position and possible outcomes; immediately or within one day for urgent complaints, otherwise ideally within 2 working days and in any event within 7 working days. NB: a RESPONSE excludes mere acknowledgements and should consist of: a telephone contact, a visit to the person complaining, or a meeting with the complainant; or a letter that covers the action to be taken, the timing of the next step by us, the name of the person dealing with the complaint; or complying with the request i.e. sending the information required.
5. Gathering initial evidence of the complaint, where required, from the site or premises, ideally straight away and in any event within 7 working days of receipt;
6. Taking action in accordance with the [Enforcement Policy](#) and where required produce the appropriate files and documents for legal opinion and Licensing & Enforcement Committee decision;
7. Informing the complainant of progress with the complaint - minimum is monthly intervals;
8. Confirming to complainants when in our opinion the complaint is resolved and/or passed on to formal enforcement procedures,
9. Reviewing all complaints that are still unresolved at the end of 3 months from receipt. Complaints are considered to be resolved when we have taken all the action we have promised to take in these standards, or we have served legal notice or commenced legal proceedings, or the matter has been referred to another agency for action.
10. We will always encourage complainants to give their names and addresses and we will not normally release these details. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated unless we believe there is an obvious risk to public health or the environment and/or the complainant is legitimately frightened of retribution.
11. Unless the specific location of the source of a complaint is provided by the customer (for example where the odour, noise, smoke etc. is coming from) Environmental Health will not normally investigate.
12. All staff operate within the Council's policies and procedures for the protection of their safety. Where complaint investigation exposes them to threat, abuse or physical assault, the normal investigation procedures may be suspended. Appropriate options will be considered for continuing response to complaints but service may be withdrawn if staff safety cannot be reasonably ensured. Our response to specific complaints is set out in other sections of the website (see [link](#)) and may override that set out above.

### (gb) Response to Correspondence.

1. We will respond to all correspondence (including emails) received by Environmental Health within 14 working days of receipt. By response we mean telephone contact with the complainant, personal visit or letter, dealing with the points raised. Where the correspondent is making a complaint (i.e. a request for service) then the appropriate timescales for response set out elsewhere in this document will apply.

### (gc) Environmental Information

1. We will provide environmental information under the Environmental Information Regulations to anyone requesting it, ideally within five days, but certainly within 20 days, of any request or of any payment being made. In the case of particularly complex requests or requests involving a large volume of material, the time for response may be extended up to 40 working days. If the information requested is particularly detailed, meaning we cannot respond within the required 20 working days, we will tell you and give you a date by which the information will be available. Charges will be made as set out [here](#).