

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

# Information for Complainants



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

[www.fermanaghomagh.com](http://www.fermanaghomagh.com)

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# Introduction

This guidance sets out how you can make a complaint. The guidance complies with the complaints procedure for local government in Northern Ireland as set out by the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsmen (NIPSO).

A complaint is

“ An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf. ”

## Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Complaints Procedure

### Complaints Procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by email or in writing. we have a **2 stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaints quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need in-depth investigation, we will talk to you about this, agree a way forward and keep you updated on our progress.

### Stage 1: Frontline response

We will always try to respond to your complaint quickly, within **5 working days** if we can. If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2

## Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints at this stage, if following discussion and agreement with you, it is clear that an in-depth investigation is needed.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **3 working days**.

We will confirm the issues of complaint to be investigated and what you want to achieve.

We will investigate the complaint and give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

## Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask NIPSO to consider it. NIPSO will assess whether there is evidence of service failure or maladministration not identified by us which requires further investigation. NIPSO will signpost you to alternative independent reviewers and provide contact details (where relevant).

### Who can complain?

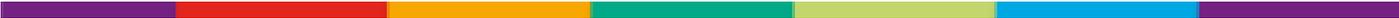
Anyone who receives or requests a Council service can make a complaint. If you feel unable to make the complaint yourself, you can ask someone else to complain on your behalf. This may include a relative or friend, your legal representative or an organisation acting on your behalf. You will need to give your written consent so that we know that someone is genuinely acting on your behalf.



# What can you complain about?

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council aims to meet the needs of all our customers. Sometimes we may fall short of what you expect us to do.

This may include:
Failure or refusal to provide a service
Inadequate quality or standard of service
An unreasonable delay in providing a service
Dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact on you
Failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
Failure to follow the appropriate administrative process
Conduct of, treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff or contractor (except where there are arrangements in place for the contractor to handle the complaint themselves)
A concern about the actions or service of an organisation who is delivering services on our behalf
Disagreement with a decision, (except where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision, or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector, e.g. disagreement with a planning decision, dissatisfied with the response to an FOI request)
Dissatisfaction with how an element of a planning decision was administered.



## What can't be dealt with through the complaints procedure?

Although we try to deal with your complaint as effectively as possible, there may be occasions where we are unable to help you. This may be because the matter you are complaining about is subject to legal proceedings or there already is an established appeals process. When you raise your complaint we will advise you as necessary.

## How to complain

You can complain:

- in person at one of our offices or venues
- by completing a complaint form available on our website [here](#) and emailing or posting it to the Council
- by telephone

Our staff will do their best to help you with the matter directly or refer you to the right person within the Council.

## When you complain, we will ask you for the following details:

- Your full name and contact details,
- Details about the complaint and what has gone wrong, and
- How you would like the matter to be resolved.

Your complaint should be made within six months of the event or issue occurring which you find reason to complain. In exceptional circumstances, the Council may accept a complaint after six months of the event occurring. This may include reasons such as you have been unable to complain within the six months as legal proceedings have been ongoing or you were not aware of the event or issue. If you have received a Stage 1 response and wish to escalate your complaint to Stage 2, this should be escalated within 2 months.

When you make a complaint and provide your personal details, we will ensure all this information is held securely and in line with our [data protection policy](#).

We will also tell you who is dealing with your complaint and provide you with their contact details.

# Points of Access

## Contacting the Council

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is committed to delivering high quality services in an efficient, effective and professional manner while providing easy access to information



**Enniskillen-**  
County Buildings,  
15 East Bridge Street,  
Enniskillen  
Co.Fermanagh  
BT74 7BW

**Omagh-**  
16 High Street,  
Omagh, Co.Tyrone  
BT78 7BQ

**Website**  
[www.fermanaghomagh.com](http://www.fermanaghomagh.com)

**Facebook**  
Corporate page  
-fermanaghomagh  
Facilities and  
Programmes  
-see other  
bespoke pages

**Twitter**  
Corporate account  
-@fermanaghomagh

**On site at various Council locations**

**Council Staff**

**Councillors**

**Facilities and Programme Enquiries:**

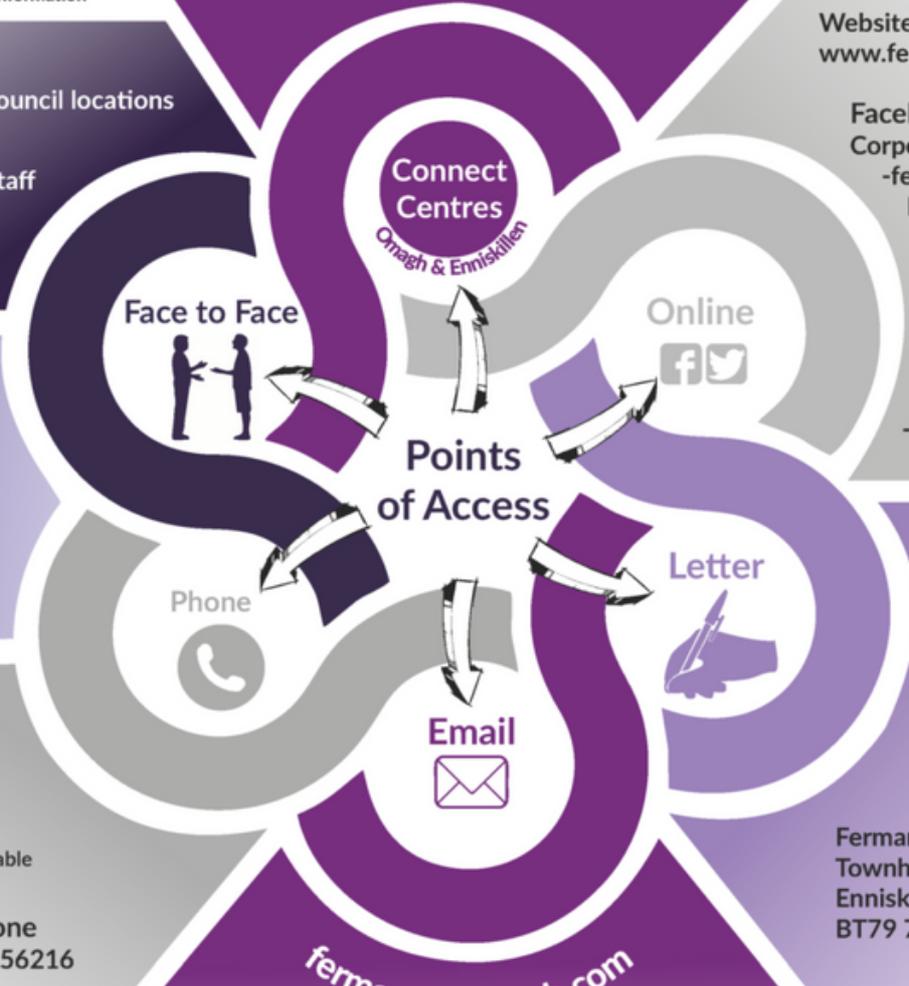
**Arts:**  
Ardhowen: Strule Arts

**Leisure:**  
Castle Park, Bawnacre,  
Omagh Leisure Centre,  
Fermanagh Lakeland Forum

**Waste Services:**  
Killyvilly, Enniskillen  
Gortrush, Omagh

**Telephone**  
-Direct dial  
-0300 303 1777  
-Emergency mobile  
phone numbers (available  
out of hours)

**Textphone**  
02882 256216



**Omagh:**  
The Grange,  
Mountjoy Road,  
Lisnamallard,  
Omagh,  
Co.Tyrone  
BT79 7BL

**Fermanagh:**  
Townhall, 2 Townhall Street,  
Enniskillen, Co.Fermanagh,  
BT79 7BA

[fermanaghomagh.com](http://fermanaghomagh.com)

**info@**

**staff name@**

**councillor@**

**Service emails@**  
e.g. [procurement@](mailto:procurement@fermanaghomagh.com)

NB- Councillors and staff have individual email addresses

**Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council welcomes your feedback.

We have a formal complaints process in the event that you have an issue of concern you wish to raise with the Council.





## Unreasonable behaviour

Everyone who comes into contact with the Council has the right to be listened to, acknowledged and respected, but the Council considers that staff have the same rights, and reserves the right to manage contact in an appropriate manner to protect staff and to maintain the effectiveness of Council services. If a member of staff feels a complainant is becoming unreasonably persistent or vexatious, they can escalate the matter.

### Unreasonable behaviour could be:

- Abusive, aggressive, offensive, or threatening language and/or behaviour, either face to face, on the telephone, in writing or on social media;
- Unreasonable demands/vexatious requests;
- Unreasonable persistence.

The Council defines unreasonable persistence/demands as complainants who, because of the frequency or nature of their contact with the Council, hinder the Council's ability to deal with other Council business; to deal with other enquiries; to consider their, or other people's complaints; and may leave staff feeling afraid, threatened or abused. A vexatious complainant is not seeking to resolve a dispute between themselves and the Council but rather is seeking to cause unnecessary aggravation or annoyance to the Council.

## Getting help to complain

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equality duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please tell us in person using the contact details above.

# Stages of your complaint



## Stage 1: Frontline response

Depending on your complaint, we will endeavour to resolve the matter immediately. We will do this within 5 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with the matter, you can ask for the complaint to be dealt with formally. If this is the case, this will be undertaken as a stage 2 investigation.

## Stage 2: Investigation

Stage 2 deals with complaints that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and require an in-depth investigation. We may decide a complaint is escalated straight to Stage 2.

We will discuss with you if your complaint needs to be dealt with at this stage.

- We will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days
- We will check with you what you are complaining about and seek to understand how you would like the matter resolved.
- We will try to resolve the matter quickly and to your satisfaction, where possible
- If your complaint is dealt with at Stage 2 (i.e. requiring an investigation), you will receive a written response within 20 working days.

If the investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you when the investigation will conclude and keep you updated on progress.

## What happens if you are still not satisfied?

NIPSO is the final stage for complaints about the majority of public services in Northern Ireland. This includes complaints about us. NIPSO is an independent organisation that investigates complaints. The service provided by NIPSO is free. It is not an advocacy or support service (but there are other organisations who can help you with advocacy or support).

If you remain dissatisfied when you have a final response from us, you can ask NIPSO to look at your complaint. NIPSO generally expect complaints to be brought to it within 6 months since you received correspondence from us informing you that the complaints handling procedure is complete and of your right to refer your complaint to NIPSO.

NIPSO will generally ask you to provide details of your complaint and a copy of our final response to your complaint.

# NIPSO's contact details are:

The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman  
33 Wellington Place  
Belfast  
BT1 6HN

Or FREEPOST NIPSO

- Freephone: 0800 34 34 24
- Email: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk)
- Web: [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)

If you would like to visit in person, you must make an appointment first.

## Other organisations

If NIPSO cannot investigate a complaint and the complaint requires an alternative route for independent review, NIPSO will tell you and provide the relevant contact details.

Also, you may wish to get independent support or advocacy to help you progress your complaint.

- Fermanagh Citizens Advice Bureau 028 6632 4334
- Omagh Independent Advice Service [028 8224 3252](tel:02882243252)

