

Appendix E

COMPLAINTS ABOUT US

How to make a complaint or raise a concern

See also: Making a general request for information

Although we make every effort to provide the best possible service, we may sometimes make mistakes. If things do go wrong, we will say sorry, put things right as far as we can, and make every effort to learn from the experience and improve the way we deliver our services. We also aim to learn from things we do well, and to address concerns and investigate the improvement opportunities by acting on suggestions received.

Your complaints are important to us. Where something has gone wrong, they help us to put it right and improve our service.

- When considering complaints we:
- Try to be helpful and accessible.
- Try to be clear, timely and thorough.
- Try to be positive about putting matters right and learning lessons for the future.
- Recognise that sometimes you may not be satisfied with what we say.

If it is urgent

Please telephone us on: 01296 744400 so that we can address the issue as soon as possible. If your call is made outside normal office hours, and it is urgent – for instance, something that is a potential danger to the public – we will notify the Duty Officer who will take appropriate action.

During operational incidents

While we welcome face-to-face contact, when an operational incident is in progress it is not possible for an officer to become involved in a discussion which could impact on operational efficiency or compromise the health and safety of the incident ground.

Need any help?

You can contact us in a number of ways:

- Telephone: 01296 744400
- Complete our contact form **INSERT HYPERLINK**
- Email: enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk
- Fax: 01296 744600

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- In writing: Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service HQ, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1BD
- Face-to-face: At any of our 20 fire stations or at the address above. If you require assistance please let us know when you contact us and we will try to help you – for example if English is not your first language, or you have a disability, or you need help understanding what to do.

What happens when I complain or raise a concern?

We try to address all complaints as quickly as possible and, unless we have been able to resolve your concern immediately the investigating officer will contact you to discuss it with you and to ask you how you would prefer to be contacted. We normally expect to respond to complaints within 20 working days of receiving them. If we cannot do so, we will let you know and explain why.

Before we come to any decision on our investigations, we provide our draft decisions for your comment. We will not treat disagreement with those views as a complaint about a decision, as no decision has been made. The investigating officer will take account of what you say in coming to their decision.

I'm not satisfied. What should I do now?

If you disagree with the decision and explain why, you should ask the investigating officer to arrange for a review to take place.

A senior member of staff who has not been involved with the investigation will review whether the decision was reasonable. The review is neutral. It will consider your comments and those of staff involved. It will not be a reinvestigation, although it can result in a reinvestigation which we aim to complete within 20 working days.

If we do agree with all or part of your complaint, we will apologise and may take other steps we consider appropriate to provide a remedy for our failure.

If we do not agree with your views, we will explain the reasons why. We hope this will help you to understand matters better, even if some of your concerns still remain.

I would like to take my complaint further

After you have received our decision on your complaint there is no further review of the same matter. Unless you raise new issues that we consider significant, we will not be able to discuss matters or respond to you further. However, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman:

- Telephone: 0300 061 0614 or 0845 602 1983.
- Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

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- Fax: 024 7682 0001
- In writing: The Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH.

Request for a review /complaints made under the Freedom Of Information Act, Data Protection Act or Environmental Information Regulations

A request for a review /complaint of how your information request was handled will be referred to the Director of Legal & Governance or a member of his team. Once the review is completed if you are still unhappy with our response, you can contact the Information Commissioner:

- Telephone: 08456 30 60 60 or 01625 54 57 45
- Email: **data@dataprotection.gov.uk**
- Fax: 01625 524510
- In writing: Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.
- Website: **www.ico.gov.uk/Global/contact_us.aspx**

The Information Commissioner will deal with complaints where you have been refused access to information or are unhappy with the way in which their request was dealt with. Complaints about Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority's publication scheme will considered at the Commissioner's discretion.

Privacy

We record and hold details of complaints on computer. We will only hold your personal information – your name, contact details and other personal information – for as long as is necessary to ensure that the complaint and any reviews are complete. We will continue to hold anonymised details of the complaint (so that you cannot be identified) and how it was dealt with, so that we can review the lessons learned from considering complaints improve the quality of our service and the experience of others who use our service.