

How do I make a **COMMENT, COMPLIMENT OR COMPLAINT** to the Fire and Rescue Service?



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This document is available in other languages, large print and audio format upon request.

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায়, বড় প্রিন্ট আকারে এবং অডিও টেপ আকারেও অনুরোধে পাওয়া যায়।

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Ce document est également disponible dans d'autres langues, en gros caractères et en cassette audio sur simple demande.

Introduction

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service aims to provide the highest standards of fire, rescue and community safety services. As a customer, there may be times when you wish to comment on the Fire and Rescue Service. We encourage complaints, compliments and comments from all members of our community as we value your opinion and it can help us to continually improve our service.

This booklet has been produced to help you if you wish to make a comment, compliment or complaint about our service.

We promise that if you make comment, compliment or complaint you will:

- be listened to;
- receive a prompt and speedy response;
- be treated fairly and with courtesy and respect and
- be given confidentiality.

In addition, no matter what you have to say, we promise that it will not affect any current or future service you may receive from us.

Will my comment, compliment or complaint make a difference?

Yes.

When we receive thanks for the work that we do, it gives everyone a tremendous sense of satisfaction.

We take all comments and complaints seriously, as they form part of an ongoing review to maintain and improve our service.

We continually work towards our vision of:

Safest People, Safest Places

Complaints Procedure

How do I make a complaint?

We are committed to dealing with your complaint as quickly and effectively as possible and our complaints procedure will help us to ensure that this is the case. It gives you the opportunity to have your complaint handled in an informal or formal way, or both.

Informal complaints are those that raise issues that can be dealt with effectively and quickly by the department manager. They usually relate to a single department or a single issue and do not require a detailed investigation. We expect the majority of complaints to be pursued this way.

A formal complaint can be made at anytime however, if you think your issue is too important to be handled in an informal way. It can also be made if you are not satisfied with the response you have received through our informal process.

Our staff are at hand to help you make your complaint in a way that is most suitable to you.

Stage 1 – Making an Informal Complaint

If you feel dissatisfied with any aspect of our Service, you should first explain your complaint directly and informally to the person with whom you have been in contact.

If you are unsure who to contact about your informal complaint, you should get in touch with our reception staff at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Belmont Business Park, Durham DH1 1TW, telephone 0845 3058383 or Email to ServiceHQ@ddfire.gov.uk

You can expect an informal response from your contact within 5 working days – you will be told how and why they have come to their conclusion.

If they do not accept the complaint, they will explain why not, and advise you what to do next if you are still not satisfied. They will give you the name and contact details of his/her Department Manager for you to pursue your complaint formally under Stage 2 of these procedures.

Stage 2 – Making a Formal Complaint

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive under stage one of these procedures, or you consider your complaint too important to be resolved informally, you should write to your initial contact's department manager setting out your complaint clearly and in detail. If you are still unclear as to whom this is, please contact our Reception Services. You should make it clear to the department manager that you want this treated as a formal complaint under stage two of the Fire and Rescue Service complaint procedures. For contact details please see page 7.

You may write, email or telephone the manager concerned. However, because we are obliged to keep records of all formal complaints, we need to agree a detailed, written statement of your complaint with you before embarking on a formal investigation. You may register your complaint by completing the complaint form within this booklet.

The person who receives your complaint under stage two will:

- make sure the complaint is clear;
- check that the stage one procedure has been completed;
- review, with the person who dealt with your initial approach, the reasons for their response;
- consider the issues afresh for themselves;
- consult fire service solicitors if there are any doubts about our statutory powers relevant to the issues;
- decide upon their own findings in the light of these considerations; and
- write to you setting out their findings.

Our target for acknowledging formal complaints at this stage of the procedure is 2 working days from the date of receipt, with a full response issued within 20 working days. If it is not possible to give you a reply within this time, we will give you an interim response telling you what is being done to deal with your complaint, and when you can expect the full reply.

What if I'm not happy with the response?

Stage 3 — Expression of dissatisfaction

If you are not satisfied with the response under stage two, you should write to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer at Service Headquarters (you may also phone him but he will need a written statement of the complaint before starting his investigation). He will inform the Chief Executive of the complaint and ask the responsible Department Manager to review the considerations already given, and will consider them again for himself, with the involvement of the fire service solicitors if necessary.

Your expression of dissatisfaction will be acknowledged within 2 working days and the Assistant Chief Fire Officer will aim to respond fully to stage three complaints within 20 working days. If this is not possible, he will write to let you know what is being done to deal with your complaint, and when you can expect the full reply. This will be the Fire and Rescue Service's final response to you under these procedures.

Is there anyone else I can contact?

If you still feel that you have been treated unfairly, you can contact one of the following:

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer for the Fire and Rescue Authority at Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UY, Tel: 03000 269732

The Local Government Ombudsman — a national commission which is independent of the Authority. The Ombudsman will normally only consider a case after it has been through all stages of the Service's complaints procedure, although there are some exceptions to this rule.

The Local Government Ombudsman for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service can be contacted at PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH Email: www.lgo.org.uk Tel: 03000 610614

Further help, support or advice about making a complaint can also be obtained from your nearest Citizen's Advice Bureau, your local councillor or MP.

Comments & Compliments

How to compliment us on something we have done well or make a suggestion for improvement

Verbally

Speak to the person (or their manager) who provided the Service you wish to comment about. For contact details, please see the following page.

In writing to

The Chief Fire Officer, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Belmont Business Park, Durham, DH1 1TW

Alternatively, complete the Comments and Compliments Form contained within this booklet, post it to the above address, or hand it into your local Fire Station.

Via the Internet

www.ddfire.gov.uk

Further Contact

If you provide us with your contact details, we will acknowledge your comment or compliment

If you need help, support or advice about making a comment or compliment, please contact:

Your local fire station (see contact details on page 7)

Reception, Service Headquarters (see contact details on page 7)

Please remember we value your comments, you are helping us to help you.

Contact Details

Fire Service Principal Officers		
Position	Name	Telephone
Chief Fire Officer	Stuart Errington	0191 375 5555
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Colin Bage	0191 375 5555

Fire Stations	
Station	Telephone
Barnard Castle *	01833 637723
Bishop Auckland	01388 602643
Consett	01207 502912
Crook *	01388 767117
Darlington	01325 469128
Durham	0191 3324258
High Handenhold	0191 3703544
Middleton In Teesdale *	01833 640725
Newton Aycliffe	01325 312531
Peterlee	0191 5863133
Seaham	0191 5812219
Sedgefield *	01740 622536
Spennymoor *	01388 811742
Stanhope *	01388 528172
Wheatley Hill *	01429 821191

* Please note these fire stations are crewed by on-call firefighters and as such are not staffed at all times.

Fire Service Headquarters	
Departments	Telephone
Community Safety	0191 3755589
Estates	0191 3755557
Finance	0191 3755574
Fire Safety Legislation	0191 3755622
General enquiries (Reception)	0845 3058383
Governance	0191 3755581
Human Resources	0191 3755665
Organisation Development	0191 3755667
Industrial/Commercial Training	01388 825444
Information Communications Technology	0191 3755580
Information Services	0191 3755582
Operations (Fire Stations)	0191 3755666
Risk	0191 3755564
Training	0191 3755632
Transport	0191 3755566

Complaint Form

In completing this form you will be dealt with formally under stage 2 of the Services Complaints Procedure

Who is this form intended for? Please provide the name of the Officer with whom you have been dealing.

Name: Station/Section:

Please give your name and address:

(If you are complaining on someone else's behalf, please give their details in addition to yours)

Name: Name:

Address: Address:

Tel: Tel:

Email: Email:

Please give details of your complaint:

(please continue on separate sheet if necessary)

What would you like to see happen?

(please continue on separate sheet if necessary)

Please tell us how you would like us to respond to your complaint e.g. telephone, letter, email:

Please sign your name and the date

Signature Date

You can post* this form or hand it into your local Fire Station. *If you are posting the response, please send to The Chief Fire Officer, Fire Service Headquarters, Belmont Business Park, Durham, DH1 1TW

For Office Use Only: Date form received: Forwarded to date:

Comments & Compliments Form

We are committed to the delivery of a quality service. If you would like to compliment us on something we have done well or make a suggestion for improvement, please contact us.

My comment/compliment/suggestion is:

(please continue on separate sheet if necessary)

If you wish to give us your name and address, we will respond to your comment or compliment:

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Email:

Date:

You can post* this form or hand it into your local Fire Station.

*If you are posting the response, please send to:

The Chief Fire Officer Officer, Fire Service Headquarters, Belmont Business Park,
Durham, DH1 1TW

For Office Use Only

Date form received:

Ref. No:

Date acknowledged:

Date passed to Designated Admin. Officer:

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Belmont Business Park
Durham
DH1 1TW
Tel: 0191 3755550
www.ddfire.gov.uk

