

Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service Complaints Policy (2026/27)

Version	1.0
Date	March 2026
Review Date	February 2027
Service	Libraries and Learning
Directorate	Neighbourhoods and Environment
Author / Owner	Operations and Performance Manager

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. What is a Complaint?
3. What This Policy Does Not Cover
4. How to Make a Complaint
5. Our Complaints Process
 - 5.1 Stage 1 – Service Investigation
 - 5.2 Stage 2 – Independent Corporate Review
6. What You Can Expect From Us
7. Support in Making a Complaint
8. After the Complaints Process
9. Data Protection and Confidentiality
10. Learning From Complaints

Contacting Us

1. Introduction

Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service (WFALS) aims to provide high-quality, inclusive learning opportunities for adults across the borough. If you are unhappy with any aspect of your experience, we want to hear from you so we can put things right and improve our services.

This policy outlines how you can make a complaint, how it will be handled, and how you can escalate your concerns if needed.

It is based on the London Borough of Waltham Forest's public complaints process and the WFALS complaints procedure for learners and service users.

2. What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about:

- the service you received
- something that has gone wrong
- a delay in receiving a service
- the way you were treated
- a decision that affects you

You do not need to use the word “complaint”. If you tell us you are unhappy and want it resolved, we will treat it as a complaint.

3. What This Policy Does Not Cover

Some matters follow separate procedures and are *not* covered by this policy, such as:

- Safeguarding concerns (adult or child)
- Appeals relating to exam results or academic assessment
- Data protection issues (handled by the Council's Data Protection Officer)
- Complaints about other council services not provided by WFALS
- Housing, parking, planning and other statutory appeal routes

If your issue falls outside this procedure, we will direct you to the correct process.

More information can be found by visiting the link below:

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/council-and-elections/making-complaint-or-compliment/complaint-process-exceptions>

4. How to Make a Complaint

You can complain in any of the following ways:

Email:

adult.learning@walthamforest.gov.uk

Phone:

020 8496 2974

In Writing or in Person:

Queens Road Learning Centre
97 Queens Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 8QR

Online:

You can also submit a complaint directly to the Council using the form below:

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/complaints-compliments-and-comments>

However contacting the Adult Learning Service Directly may allow us to address your complaint directly and quickly.

If you need help

You can:

- Get support at any Waltham Forest Adult Learning Centre or Library
 - Ask for reasonable adjustments (e.g. taking a complaint by phone due to disability)
 - Ask a representative to support you
-

5. Our Complaints Process

WFALS follows a two-stage process, consistent with the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

5.1

Stage 1 – Internal Investigation

When we receive your complaint, we will:

Acknowledge it within 3 working days

You will receive a:

- reference number
- named contact responsible for your complaint
- date by which you will receive a full response

Your complaint will be reviewed by an appropriate manager who was not involved in the issue.

We may contact you to clarify your concerns.

Respond within 20 working days

If we need more time, we will tell you why and provide a new date.
(20 working days is the formal Stage 1 timescale.)

Your response will tell you:

- what we found
- whether we uphold your complaint
- what action we will take
- how we will prevent the issue from happening again
- how to escalate to Stage 2

5.2

Stage 2 – Independent Corporate Review (Chief Executive's Office)

If you remain dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1, you can request an independent investigation of your complaint to be conducted by the Council's corporate Complaints Team on behalf of the Council's Chief Executive.

How Stage 2 works

To do this, please contact the Council within 28 calendar days of receiving this Stage 1 response, clearly stating the reasons why you want to escalate your complaint.

The Complaints Team will investigate the complaint under Stage 2 of the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. You can submit your Stage 2 request in the following ways:

Online: The easiest and most efficient way to submit your Stage 2 complaint is by completing the online form on the Council's website, which can be found at:

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/complaints-compliments-and-comments>

Please include that you are submitting a Stage 2 complaint and, if possible, provide your Stage 1 complaint reference number.

By post: You can also request a Stage 2 investigation by writing to The Complaints Team, London Borough of Waltham Forest, Town Hall Complex, Forest Road, London, E17 4JF.

More information regarding the complaints procedure can be found at the link above.

7. Support in Making a Complaint

We want everyone to feel able to make a complaint. We will:

- provide reasonable adjustments
 - accept complaints made by representatives (with consent)
 - offer help for those who need assistance submitting their complaint
-

8. After the Complaints Process

If you have completed Stage 1 and Stage 2 and still remain dissatisfied, you may contact:

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

<https://www.lgo.org.uk>

They will review whether they can investigate your case.

9. Data Protection and Confidentiality

All complaints are handled confidentially and in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Complaints specifically about data protection breaches are handled directly by the Council's Data Protection Officer, not through this procedure.

10. Learning From Complaints

We use complaints to:

- identify what went wrong
- improve our processes
- develop staff practice
- enhance the learner experience

Themes and actions are regularly reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team.

Contacting Us

Email: adult.learning@walthamforest.gov.uk

Phone: 020 8496 2974

Website: <https://lbwfadultlearning.co.uk/>

Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service
Queens Road Learning Centre
97 Queens Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 8QR
