

Leeds City Council

How we deal with petitions

1.0 General

Leeds City Council welcomes petitions. We recognise that petitions are an important way in which you can let us know your concerns.

This guidance applies to all petitions with any number of signatures, except for statutory petitions¹.

Petitions are not the only - or necessarily the easiest or quickest - way to resolve an issue or to make your views known. It may be better to:

- contact the relevant **Council service or officer** directly;
- contact your **local Ward Councillor**;
- contact the relevant **Executive Member**;
- raise a **deputation** to your local Area Committee;
- raise a **deputation** to full Council (a meeting which all Councillors can attend);
- raise a matter at your Area Committee's **local forum**;
- raise a matter at the **open forum** of your Area Committee;
- request a **Scrutiny Board inquiry**; or
- make a complaint under our **complaints process**.

If you do submit a petition, it should:

- include a clear and short **statement** about what the petition is for;
- state clearly the petition is **directed to Leeds City Council**;
- relate to a **function carried out by the Council or an improvement in the economic, social or environmental well-being of the Council's area**, to which any of our partner authorities could contribute; and
- **say clearly what you want us to do**.

People signing your petition:

- may be **any age**;
- should provide an **address** which shows that they **live, work or study** in this area.

2.0 Petition Organiser

Your petition should also identify the **petition organiser**. This is the person we will contact about the petition. We also need to have their address for correspondence, and/or telephone and/or e-mail details. We won't be able to deal with your petition if we can't identify a petition organiser.

¹ These are petitions made under a particular Act, for example under the Local Government Act 2000, asking for a referendum. These will be dealt with under the relevant law.

3.0 Sending in your paper petition

You should submit your petition directly to whichever Council service, Councillor or officer you consider to be the most appropriate. If you are not sure who to send it to, please send it to the Corporate Governance Team, Governance Services, Leeds City Council, Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR.

Or, you can scan your petition and send it by e-mail, to a specific service, Councillor or officer. If you are not sure who to e-mail it to, please e-mail it to petitions@leeds.gov.uk.

4.0 Electronic petitions

You can also create and submit an electronic petition, using the Council's electronic petition facility. The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) will decide on our behalf whether you will be allowed to use our facility. We will give you a reason if we refuse your request.

You can send us a combined electronic and paper petition, but the paper petition must be sent to us by the closing date for the electronic petition. Please let us know if you intend to do this.

5.0 Acknowledging your petition

We will acknowledge every petition we receive, to the petition organiser. This will be done in accordance with our usual standards for dealing with correspondence. We won't necessarily send an acknowledgement to every person who has signed the petition, however.

We will also give the petition organiser any information about the steps we have taken or plan to take in response to your petition.

6.0 Steps in response to your petition

Our response will depend on what your petition asks for, and how many people have signed it. Steps may include one or more of the following:

- giving effect to the petition;
- considering the petition at full Council (a meeting which all councillors can attend);
- holding an inquiry;
- commissioning relevant research;
- organising a public meeting;
- providing a written response outlining the Council's views; and
- referring the issue to a Scrutiny Board².

² Scrutiny Boards are committees of councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the Council. They are often referred to as the "Council's watchdog".

We will not take steps in response to your petition:

- if it is **vexatious, abusive** or where it is otherwise **inappropriate** to take steps;
- if it refers to a specific **planning or licensing application** (unless the petition alleges systematic failure);
- where there is a **statutory right to appeal or review** about the concern raised;
- if it does **not relate** to a function we carry out, nor an improvement in the economic, social, environmental well-being of our area, to which our partners can contribute.

But we will acknowledge the petition to the petition organiser, and explain why we can't take any steps, if this is the case. We will also provide the petition organiser with any helpful information we can.

7.0 Review of steps we have taken

If we have taken steps in response to your petition, but you do not feel we have dealt with your petition adequately, the petition organiser may ask for a **review** of our response.

Please note – this right of appeal does **not** arise where no steps have been taken because your petition falls into any of the categories set out in the boxed text in paragraph 6 above.

To request a review, the petition organiser must contact **by post**:

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development
Leeds City Council
Scrutiny Support
1st Floor West
Civic Hall
Leeds
LS1 1UR.

Or, the petition organiser could request a review by **e-mail** to: scrutiny@leeds.gov.uk

Any request should:

- be made within **28** working days of receiving our notification about the steps we have taken, or intend to take; and
- include a short **explanation** about why you think our response to your petition is inadequate.

The review will be referred to a **Scrutiny Board**, and the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development will inform the petition organiser of the results.

8.0 Contact details

If you have any queries, please:

- **write** to the Corporate Governance Team, Governance Services at Civic Hall
Leeds LS1 1UR; or
- **telephone** 0113 - 39 51712; or
- **e-mail** us at petitions@leeds.gov.uk