



Petition Scheme Terms and Conditions of Use

Full details of the Hounslow Council Petition Scheme can be found at www.hounslow.gov.uk/petitions.

Purpose of a petition

The purpose of the e-petition service is to enable as many people as possible to make their views known. An e-petition does not have to replace a paper petition and can be done as well as a paper one. All petitions will be accepted and published on this website, providing they meet the criteria below.

Criteria for accepting a petition

Petitioners may freely disagree with Hounslow Council or call for changes of policy. There will be no attempt to exclude critical views and decisions to accept or reject will not be made on a party political basis. However, to protect this service from abuse, petitions must satisfy some basic conditions. To submit a petition, you must use the online form to provide:

- (a) the title or subject of the petition;
- (b) a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioner wishes Hounslow Council to take. The petition will be returned to you to edit if it is unclear what action is being sought;
- (c) the petition author's contact address (this will not be placed on the website);
- (d) a duration for the petition.

Complying with the law

The information in a petition must be submitted in good faith. In order for the petition service to comply with the law, you must not include:

- **Party political material.** Please note, this does not mean it is not permissible to petition on controversial issues. For example, this party political petition would not be permitted: "We petition Hounslow Council to change the Labour executive's policy on education", but this non-party political version would be: "We petition Hounslow Council to change their policy on education".
- **potentially libellous, false, or defamatory statements;**
- **information which may be protected by an injunction or court order** (for example, the identities of children in custody disputes);

- **material which is potentially confidential**, commercially sensitive, or which may cause personal distress or loss;
- **any commercial endorsement**, promotion of any product, service or publication;
- **URLs or web links** (we cannot vet the content of external sites, and therefore cannot link to them from this site);
- **the names of individual officials of public bodies**, unless they are part of the senior management of those organisations;
- **the names of family members** of elected representatives or officials of public bodies;
- **the names of individuals**, or information where they may be identified, in relation to criminal accusations;
- **language which is offensive, intemperate, or provocative**. This not only includes obvious swear words and insults, but any language to which people reading it could reasonably take offence (we believe it is possible to petition for anything, no matter how radical, politely).

Rejecting a petition

We reserve the right to reject:

- petitions that are similar to and/or overlap with an existing petition or petitions;
- petitions which ask for things outside the remit or powers of Hounslow Council;
- statements that don't actually request any action - ideally start the title of your petition with a verb;
- wording that is impossible to understand;
- statements that amount to advertisements;
- petitions which are intended to be humorous, or which have no point about government policy (however witty these are, it is not appropriate to use a publically-funded website for purely frivolous purposes);
- issues for which an e-petition is not the appropriate channel (for example, correspondence about a personal issue);
- Freedom of Information requests. This is not the right channel for FOI requests; information about the appropriate procedure can be found at www.ico.gov.uk/ or www.hounslow.gov.uk/foia

We will strive to ensure that petitions that do not meet our criteria are not accepted, but where a petition is accepted which contains misleading information we reserve the right to post an interim response to highlight this point to anyone visiting to sign the petition.

Common causes for rejection

In order to help you avoid common problems, we've produced this list:

- We don't accept petitions on individual legal cases such as deportations because we can never ascertain whether the individual involved has given permission for their details to be made publicly known. We advise petitioners to take their concerns on such matters directly to the Home Office.
- Please don't use 'shouting' capital letters excessively as they can make petitions fall foul of our 'impossible to read' criteria.
- We cannot accept petitions which call upon Hounslow Council to "recognise" or "acknowledge" something, as they do not clearly call for a recognisable action. Petitions that do not follow these guidelines cannot be accepted. In these cases, you will be informed in writing of the reason(s) your petition has been refused. If this happens, we will give you the option of altering and resubmitting the petition so it can be accepted.
- If you decide not to resubmit your petition, or if the second one is also rejected, we will list your petition and the reason(s) for not accepting it on this website. We will publish the full text of your petition, unless the content is illegal or offensive.
- Once accepted, petitions will be made available on this website for anyone to sign. Anyone signing the petition must provide their name, address and a verifiable email address. No personal details other than their name will be published on the site. Information about any individual will not be used for any other purpose than in relation to the petition, unless they choose to sign up for other services offered on this website.
- It will usually take up to five working days from the time a petition proposal is received for it to appear on the website, although during busy periods it may take longer. For more information on the process, read our [step-by-step guide](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/petitions) at www.hounslow.gov.uk/petitions.
- Your petition will be available on this website until the specified closing date. If, however, during this time it becomes clear that your petition is not being run in accordance with the terms, we reserve the right to withdraw it. If this happens, we will contact you first to allow you to address the concerns we raise and we will only remove the petition as a last resort.
- Please note that to keep the system manageable, and justify use of resources, we can usually only respond to petitions of **10 (ten)** signatures or more.