



# **How to write to your Councillor**

## **A short guide**

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# How to write to your Councillor

## Nine Steps

1) Ensure that you're writing to the councillors representing your ward. You can check which ward you're in by putting your postcode into this website: **WriteToThem**

2) Once you know what ward you live in, you can find your councillors' contact details on the Edinburgh Council website here: **Your councillors by ward**

The complete list of Councillors, as at January 2022, is **available here**.

3) A personalised email from your own email address has more impact than using WriteToThem.

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# How to write to your Councillor

## Nine Steps

4) However, if you're short of time, you can use the **WriteToThem** website to compose an email to your councillors. This is better than not writing at all. Simply click on 'Write to all your councillors' after you've put your postcode in.

5) Write to all your councillors in your ward – don't just focus on the ones you think will be sympathetic. You might be able to change the minds of the ones who don't currently agree with you, while your allies will be able to use your email to argue for your position.

6) Keep your email short, to the point, polite and always ask your councillor to do something for you, even if it's just replying with their opinion.

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# How to write to your Councillor

## Nine Steps

7) Always include your home address and postcode so your councillor knows that you're one of their constituents.

8) Consider sending a copy of any reply you receive to Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann is Lodainn) so we can monitor which councillors are supportive.

**[cnpduneideann@gmail.com](mailto:cnpduneideann@gmail.com)**

9) If you don't get a response within around 7 working days, you can follow up. Forward on your original email with a polite covering note saying "I don't appear to have received a response to my email below, sent on [date]. Please could you respond to the points I've raised?" or something similar.

## **Dos and Don'ts for writing to your Councillor**

**Do always include your home address and postcode** so your councillor knows you're one of their constituents,

**Do always be polite and concise,**

**Do try to arrange a time to discuss the matter face to face with your councillors,** if they are still holding constituents' surgeries, or by phone if that is possible.

**Do try to develop a rapport with your councillors** – it's far more likely you will persuade your councillors to your point of view if you have built up a rapport with them. If you have areas of common interest, like you live on the same street or your children attend the same sports club, try to mention this to build rapport.

## **Dos and Don'ts for writing to your Councillor**

**Do always ask your councillor to do something for you.** Ideally this would be speaking to their education spokesperson and letting you know what the outcome of the discussion was, but it might also be seeking factual information from council officers.

**Don't be rude or abusive,** even if you're angry.

**Don't be offended if your councillor copies their reply into somebody else at the council** without explaining who this is and why. All councillors receive some admin support to help keep track of constituents' correspondence, and this is why they have been copied in. This complies with data protection policies and it would be impossible to keep track of the thousands of constituents contacts otherwise.

## **Dos and Don'ts for writing to your Councillor**

**Don't write to councillors who do not represent your ward.** This is a waste of your time and theirs. The only exception to this rule is when a committee decision is imminent and you are appealing to the committee to vote a certain way, but you should only do this if you have already emailed your local ward councillors. This article **explains these issues** in more detail.

**Don't spam your councillors by sending multiple emails on the same subject in a short space of time,** and don't send your email to all councillors – this will get your email binned and likely added to a spam list.

**Don't email council officers** – your councillors are the ones who are accountable to you. Council officers have to implement decisions made by committees of councillors.



## Suggestions for the structure of your email

- a) Start with a formal greeting:  
“Dear Councillor [Surname]” (unless you know them personally, in which case first names are fine).
  
- b) Explain your personal interest and, if relevant, your circumstances e.g., the age and stage of your children at school.
  
- c) Make your points concisely. Shorter emails are better.
  
- d) Ask your councillor to do something for you. For example, ask them to raise a question with council officers, or ask them to speak to the Education spokesperson for their party.

**(continues overleaf)**

## Suggestions for the structure of your email

e) Make it clear that you expect a response. For example, "Please can you reply once you have spoken to your education spokesperson to clarify why the council is taking this approach."

f) Include your name, address and postcode at the end of the email so your councillor knows you are one of their constituents.

## Leig fios | Contact

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer:

**[cnpduneideann@gmail.com](mailto:cnpduneideann@gmail.com)**

**[cnpduneideannblog.wordpress.com](http://cnpduneideannblog.wordpress.com)**

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**Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann is Lodainn)  
Am Faoilleach 2022**