



## Complaints Procedure

### Introduction

If we receive any complaints from members of the public, stakeholders or others who feel that we have not met their expectations, we will ensure that they are investigated in a fair and consistent manner by applying the procedure detailed below.

### Why complain?

You should complain if you feel dissatisfaction with the standard of service delivered, actions or omissions made by the Board, its staff, service providers etc., which are having or may have a detrimental effect upon your interests or activities.

### Procedure

#### Informal

Your first action should be to contact the Board directly and liaise with the person most appropriate to deal with your complaint.

If you remain dissatisfied with the response, you will be referred to a senior manager, who will endeavour to mitigate and resolve the issue. However, it is important to remember that not all complaints can or should be resolved in the complainant's favour.

#### Formal

Should you remain dissatisfied, the formal complaints procedure will be implemented in order to investigate the matter further. Please complete our **Complaints Form** detailing the basis of your complaint and any actions you feel the Board should take. Please provide as much relevant information as possible i.e. details of communications, reference numbers, copies of correspondence etc. The form is available to download from our website or you may request a copy to be sent via post. Once complete, please send it to us via email or post, as per the contact details on the form.

Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within two working days in order to confirm that we fully understand its nature and content. You will also be informed as to who will be investigating your complaint. This will be the Board's Chief Executive, one of the Board's senior managers or a senior member of the Board, depending on the nature of the complaint.

We will endeavour to complete our investigations and provide a written response within 15 working days of the issuing of the acknowledgement. Should the nature of the complaint not allow a full response within that timescale, the written response will explain the reasons for the delay and provide an estimate of when a full response may be expected.

Should our reply not resolve the matter, please inform the Board as soon as possible, ensuring you provide full details of your remaining concerns. If appropriate or necessary, your complaint will be reviewed at a more senior level in the Board and a written response provided within 15 days of receipt of your letter.

## **The Local Government Ombudsman**

If, after following the procedure laid out above, you remain dissatisfied, you may refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman - an independent body who will investigate allegations of maladministration causing injustice or offence. The Ombudsman will expect that a first attempt of resolution has been made with the Board. The Ombudsman only handles complaints where it can be clearly demonstrated that an injustice has occurred.

Examples of maladministration by the Board may include:

- Making a mistake
- Not delivering services in a timely fashion
- Not adhering to its own rule of governance or statute
- Reneging on promises
- Unfair or discriminatory treatment
- Provision of incorrect information
- Undertook its duties without demonstrating correct levels of professionalism or due diligence
- An injustice caused by the Board's maladministration may include, if you:
  - Did not get the service or benefit you were entitled to or there was a delay before you got it
  - Suffered financial loss
  - Incurred avoidable expense, trouble or inconvenience, or suffered avoidable uncertainty or stress

The Local Government Ombudsman might not investigate your complaint if they consider that the injustice is only slight or if it believes the board has already taken, or is willing to take, satisfactory action to resolve it.

The Local Government Ombudsman contact details:

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)