**External Complaints Procedure**

Document status

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| **Name**  | **Purpose** |
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| All staff and Commissioners | Mandatory Read |
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| ARC | For review and agreement of minor amendments |
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# Introduction

We welcome comments about our performance and service delivery, and regard complaints as an important way of helping us to achieve higher standards.

# What is a Complaint?

A complaint expresses dissatisfaction about something and could highlight a need for improvement or that a change in procedures is required. A complaint might be made about: a failure or delay in dealing with a matter; bias or unfairness; a discrimination or discourtesy; a failure to follow proper procedures; or a mistake made in carrying out our functions.

2.1 Complaints in relation to the outcome of a review or about an ongoing review

Correspondence received about the Commission’s conclusions as part of an ongoing review will be treated as responses to consultation on the review in line with our [electoral review procedure](http://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/Corporate%20Documents/technical-guidance-2014%20%28reduced%29.pdf).

The reason for having a different procedure if a review is ongoing, is that the Commission considers all responses to consultations and evidence provided and publishes the outcome of a review in its Final Recommendations.

There is some discretion when determining if the Commission will choose to respond to complaints about the outcome of a review and they will always be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. [[1]](#footnote-2)

# How Can I Make a Complaint?

You can make a complaint in the following ways

* **By e-mail** using the **contact details** listed below,
* **In writing**
* by **telephone.**

You will be required to give your name and address; anonymous complaints will be kept on file, but they will not always be investigated; however, if the complaint is of a serious nature, LGBCE may determine that an investigation is necessary.

You need to set out the circumstances and the nature of your complaint.

All complaints should be sent to the Director of Corporate Services, in the first instance, who will liaise with the relevant manager. The Office Manager & HR Lead will coordinate an investigation into your complaint and will provide a written response, normally within **15** working days.

# Complaint Contact Details

Lynn Ingram

Director of Corporate Services

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

1st Floor, Windsor House

50 Victoria Street

London SW1H 0TL

0330 500 1263

lynn.ingram@lgbce.org.uk

# Complaint Procedure

We will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If we are unable to do this, the Office Manager & HR Lead will send you an acknowledgement letter, including a date by which you can expect a full response. We will make every effort to send a detailed reply within **15** working days. If it is not possible to provide a full response in this time, the Office Manager & HR Lead will write to you explaining the reason for the delay and giving a date that you can expect to receive a response.

# How Will Complaints Be Investigated?

**STAGE 1:**  In the first instance, your complaint will be investigated by the manager of the relevant section, and you can normally expect a response within **15** working days. All complaints will be thoroughly and fairly investigated. If you feel that your complaint should be investigated in confidence, you need to make this clear when making your initial complaint to the Director of Corporate Services giving your reasons. In this case we will not divulge your name without your prior approval.

# What if I am not satisfied with the Response?

**STAGE 2:**  You may ask for your complaint to go to the next stage, which is then consideration by the Chief Executive of the Commission.  You can normally expect a response within **20** working days at this stage. [[2]](#footnote-3)

**STAGE 3:** If, after the second stage, you are still dissatisfied with the response, you may ask for the matter to be referred to the Chair of the Commission for a final decision.  You can normally expect a response within **20** working days at this stage. [[3]](#footnote-4)

At each stage, we will try to deal with the complaint and send a detailed response within the timescales set out above. Where this is not possible, you will receive a letter explaining why, and giving a date when you can expect a detailed reply.

If, having exhausted the Commission’s Complaints Procedure, you are still unsatisfied; you are entitled to complain to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, also known as the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman. However, the Parliamentary Ombudsman can only consider complaints which are referred by a Member of Parliament, so you will need to contact your MP at this stage if they have not already been involved. The Ombudsman will normally expect you to have gone through all the stages of our complaint’s procedure first.

Information can be found on the Ombudsman’s website: [https://www.ombudsman.org.uk](https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/making-complaint)

Contact details of the **Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman** are:

**Citygate, Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3HQ Tel:0345 015 4033.**

# Complaints Process Table

**Staff try to resolve any complaint immediately**, however if this is not possible, the following timetable **must not** be exceeded:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **By When (Working Days)** | **By Whom** |
| Forward complaint to Office Manager & HR Lead for logging | Immediately | Person receiving the complaint |
| Log complaint, send acknowledgement and copy to relevant manager, DSC (Stage 1) or Chief Exec (Stage 2) | End of Day 2 | Office Manager & HR Lead |
| Check progress (if final response not yet received) | Day 5 | Officer Manager & HR Lead |
| Send draft final response to DSC (Stage 1) or Chief Executive (Stage 2) for sign-off | stage 1 - Day 10\* stage 2 - Day 15\* ( | Responsible Manager |
| Send final response to Office Manager & HR Lead to send out | stage 1 - Day 10\* stage 2 – Day 15\* - or immediately following sign-off by Chief Executive | Responsible Manager |
| Send final response to complainant and add details to complaints log. | Same day as received from Responsible Manager | Office Manager & HR Lead |

\* Our policy states that the deadlines for complaints are:

* Stage 1: 15 working days
* Stage 2: 20 working days
* Stage 3: 20 working days

These are the latest deadlines for responses, however our process is to respond well within the policy deadline, as outlined in the above table.

1. There is a separate process for Freedom of Information requests and appeals. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. On occasions, the Commission will wish to review circumstances, discuss, and decide on a complaint collectively. In these circumstances a nominated Commissioner will leave the meeting and take no part in the discussion or collective agreement in order that One Commissioner may remain impartial should the complaint be taken to Step 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. If the Commission has collectively considered the complaint at Stage Two, then the nominated Commissioner who was not involved in that consideration will consider your complaint at this stage. This will be explained in the response we send you. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)