

## External Complaints Procedure

### Document status

<b>Abstract</b>	This document outlines LGBCE's approach to handling complaints about our performance and service delivery to help us achieve higher standards.
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4.0	Nov 2021	Lynn Ingram	ARC for Review	Policy Review
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4.2	Aug 2024	DCS	New address	Address change

### Document distribution / approval

Name	Purpose
All staff and Commissioners	Mandatory Read
Leadership Team	For comment
ARC	For review and agreement of minor amendments
Commission	Owner and significant changes

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### 1. Introduction

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

### 2. Changes in external environment

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman give guidance on handling complaints and can be found at <https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/>

### 3. 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.

#### 3.1. 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 [review guidance](#).

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. There is a separate process for Freedom of Information requests and appeals.

### **3.2. 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 HR Lead will coordinate an investigation into your complaint and will provide a written response, normally within **15** working days.

### **3.3. Complaint Contact Details**

Kathryn Trower  
Director of Corporate Services  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
7th Floor  
3 Bunhill Row  
London EC1Y 8YZ  
0330 500 1263  
[Kathryn.Trower@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:Kathryn.Trower@lgbce.org.uk)

### **3.4. Complaint in relation to an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion issue**

If you are a member of the public and have a concern about Equality, Diversity or Inclusion in relation to an electoral review, our EDI policy contains a section on raising concerns relating to EDI or you can contact:

- Contact the Director of Corporate Services ([Kathryn.Trower@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:Kathryn.Trower@lgbce.org.uk))

Here is a link to the Commission's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy  
<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion-policy>

## **4 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 HR Lead will write to you explaining the reason for the delay and giving a date that you can expect to receive a response.

## **5 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.

## **6 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. 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.

**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. 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.

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>

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

Citygate, Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3HQ

Tel:0345 015 4033

[PHSO Making A Complaint](#)

## 7. Complaints Process Table

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

<u>Action</u>	<u>By When (Working Days)</u>	<u>By Whom</u>
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	HR Lead
Check progress (if final response not yet received)	Day 5	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	HR Lead
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\* 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.**