

External complaints procedure

Document status

Abstract	This document outlines the Commission'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	DCS	ARC for Review	Policy Review
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4.2	Aug 2024	DCS	New address	Address change
5	Nov 2025	HR Lead	Review	Minor amendments

Related policies

Correspondence handling

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Freedom of Information

Whistleblowing

Information management, security and personal data policy

Privacy notice

Document distribution / approval

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

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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 provides guidance on complaint handling, including the Complaint Standards Framework and principles of good complaint handling. These principles emphasise:

- Early resolution of complaints wherever possible
- Transparency in communication with complainants
- Clear escalation pathways and investigation plans
- Using complaints as a source of learning and service improvement

Organisations are encouraged to actively listen to complainants, clarify expectations, share investigation plans, and keep complainants informed throughout the process. More information can be found at: <https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/making-complaint>

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

We will treat correspondence that we receive that relates to the recommendations of an ongoing review in accordance with our technical guidance. The reason for this is that, when a review is ongoing, the Commission takes into account all correspondence, consultation responses and evidence submitted before publishing its conclusions as part of our Final Recommendations.

Correspondence that raises concerns about the process by which a review has been conducted, rather than the outcome itself, will be handled under our complaints procedure.

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 asked to give your name and address however should you wish to remain anonymous, your complaint will be investigated, and recorded in line with our record management policy.

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

Bipon Bhakri
Director of Corporate Services
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
7th Floor
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ
0330 500 1263

Bipon.Bhakri@lgbce.org.uk

3.4 Complaint in relation to personal data

If you are a member of the public and have a concern about how your data is being handled in relation to an electoral review, you can raise your concern by contacting us directly: DPO@lgbce.org.uk

4 Complaint procedure

We will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If we are unable to do this, the 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, we 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.

Complaints about a Commissioner should be raised with the Chair of the Commission or in their absence, the Deputy Chair. Complaints about the Board Chair should be raised with the Chair of the Commission's Audit & Risk Committee. Complaints about the Chief Executive should be raised with the Board Chair. Complaints about the Directors should be raised with the Chief Executive.

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 considered by the Chief Executive. If the complaint is about the Chief Executive or Board Chair, another Commissioner who has not been involved will be selected to lead stage 2.

You can normally expect a response within **20** working days at this stage.

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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 complaints 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

Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

[PHSO Making A Complaint](#)

7 Complaints process table

Staff aim 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 HR Lead for logging	Within one working day of receipt of the complaint	Person receiving the complaint
Send acknowledgement and copy to relevant manager and DCS (stage 1), 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 DCS (stage 1), Chief Executive (stage 2) for sign-off	Stage 1 - Day 10*; Stage 2 - Day 15*	Responsible Manager
Send final response to HR Lead to send out	Within the required timeframe following sign-off	Responsible Manager

Send final response to complainant and add details to complaints log

Same day as received from Responsible Manager

HR Lead

* Our policy states that the deadlines for complaints are:

- Stage 1: 15 working days
- Stage 2: 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.

8 Privacy policy

Our privacy notice sets out what to expect when we collect personal information. Access our privacy policy using this link: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/privacy>