

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The authorities administered from this office have a procedure for dealing with complaints from members of the public and others. Despite our best endeavours, we recognise that things may not always meet your expectations. We follow a standard procedure to ensure that we investigate your complaint fully and fairly and which enables complaints to be dealt with in a consistent way.

Although most of the activities undertaken by those authorities are permissive and there is generally no duty to act, we welcome hearing from you if you are unhappy with our services and want to make a complaint.

### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the service, action or lack of action of an authority affecting an individual, group or organisation.

### **The Steps to Follow**

Some complaints can be dealt with immediately, and if possible we would like to put things right or explain our actions straight away, if possible, rather than require you to go through a formal process. As a first step therefore, if you are not happy with the way a matter has been dealt with, please go back to the person with whom you first dealt.

If you are still not happy about the way in which your complaint has been dealt with, then we will adopt a formal procedure to investigate it further. Please fill in the attached form setting out your view of what went wrong and what the authority should do to put matters right. Please provide as much information as possible about your complaint, including the name of the authority, references, dates of correspondence, telephone calls etc.

We will acknowledge your complaint in writing and tell you who is dealing with it and how they can be contacted.

We will investigate your complaint and, where possible, send a response within 15 working days. If the matter requires a longer investigation, we will advise you and let you know when a full reply will be sent.

If you are not satisfied with our reply, please let us know why. If possible we will investigate further and review your concerns at a more senior level. We would look to provide a further reply within 15 working days.

### **Local Government Ombudsman**

If you remain dissatisfied you may refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, who is entirely independent of the authorities and who investigates allegations of maladministration causing injustice to the person who has complained. However, the Ombudsman will normally expect you to have tried to settle your complaint with the authority first. Any complaint must involve more than a disagreement and needs to show that something went wrong and that an injustice was caused.

Examples of maladministration could be if an authority:-

Made a mistake

Took too long to do something

Did not follow its own rules or the law

Gave you wrong information

Did not reach a decision in the right way; for example by not considering relevant information or considering irrelevant information or not following correct procedures

You might have been caused injustice by an authority if you suffered

A financial loss or

avoidable expense, trouble or inconvenience or

avoidable uncertainty or stress.

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

The Local Government Ombudsman has a leaflet called "Complaint to the Council? How to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman." While the leaflet refers to Councils, the same principles apply equally to the authorities administered from this office. There is also a leaflet on the LGO website entitled "How the Ombudsman will deal with your complaint." You can get a copy of these leaflets by telephoning their advice line on 0300 061 0614 or downloading them from their website at [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk).

## COMPLAINTS FORM

**The Clerk  
Middle Level Offices  
85 Whittlesey Road  
March  
PE15 0AH**

**Your name (please print):**

**Your address, including postcode:**

**Your telephone number:**

**Your e-mail address:**

**Name of authority to whom the complaint is addressed:**

**Brief details of your complaint:**

**What do you think should be done to put matters right?:**

A copy of this form will be logged in a register by the Clerk to the authority. Within 15 working days, either a full response or a progress report will be sent to you.

If you are not satisfied with the reply you receive then you should write again to the above address and arrangements will be made for a further review to be carried out.

**FOR OFFICIAL USE:**

**Date Received:**

**Reference Number:**

**Person dealing:**

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