

# Communication about your complaint

## Our Service Standards

In line with our Service Standards we will communicate effectively with you. We will:

- Treat you politely, respectfully and with dignity.
- Communicate with you through your preferred option (e.g. email, post etc) where possible.
- Explain our role to you.
- Let you know what we can and cannot do.
- Explain our process for handling complaints.
- Let you know regularly what is happening with your complaint.
- Give you contact details for the member of staff dealing with your complaint.
- Give you accurate information, in plain and clear language.
- Look at how we can support you to use our service, for example if you are disabled.

## What you can expect from us

We will assess your complaint based on the information you gave us when you made your complaint.

We will let you know if we need more information from you and we may contact you to discuss your complaint.

We will let you know whether there is any further action we can take, including if we decide to investigate or settle the complaint with the public body you have complained about.

If we investigate your complaint,

- we will give you an opportunity to discuss your complaint with us. We will do this to make sure that you have a fair opportunity to be heard. This gives you the chance to tell us about the events you have complained about and (if we find that the public body got things wrong), what steps you think the public body should take to put things right.
- we will keep you updated on the progress of our investigation. We will give you a realistic estimate of the likely timeframes on our investigation and when you are likely to hear from us.

We aim to deliver a high-quality complaints handling service, which looks at and decides complaints thoroughly but proportionately, and we will tell you about our decision on your complaint clearly. At that point our file is closed.

We will reply to any initial follow up queries you may have about our decision. However, we will not reply to repeat calls or emails/contact from you.

If you are still unhappy with our decision, we have a process in place through which, under certain limited circumstances, you can ask for our decision to be reviewed. Once a review has been completed, we will not reply to any further repeat contact from you.

## What we ask of you

Please treat our staff politely and with respect and dignity. Each of our caseworkers deal with many cases at a time and will not be able to reply to you immediately. As our staff work flexibly, they may contact you outside normal working hours of 9am to 5pm. As our resources are limited and so that we deliver a fair and equal service to all complainants:

- After we have discussed your case with you, we will not be able to have repeat calls with you, but we will keep in contact with you if we investigate your complaint.

- When you call us or email us, we will regularly acknowledge we have received contact from you. We will consider the information you have given us when looking at your complaint. If we need to respond, we will do so within 10 working days.
- We will not reply to or acknowledge emails which are not addressed directly to us which we are copied into.
- We will explain the reasons for any decision we have taken on your complaint. However, we will not be able to have repeat telephone discussions with you, return repeated calls from you or respond to repeat emails or written contact from you about this.