



## Complaints Handling Procedure





Thank you for taking the time to look over our complaints handling procedure. We actively encourage feedback from anyone who uses our services because it helps us to tailor them to better meet the needs of our customers.

There are a variety of ways that you can make a comment or submit a compliment about one of our services, via Facebook ([www.facebook.com/culturenl](http://www.facebook.com/culturenl)), Twitter (@culturenl) or directly to individual services. This document is specifically about how we handle complaints. For more general information on how to make a comment or compliment, go to [www.culturenl.co.uk/feedback](http://www.culturenl.co.uk/feedback).

We work hard to deliver high quality services in a way that suits the needs of everyone but it's inevitable that we won't get it right for everyone all of the time. If you feel that we have got something wrong, you need to be able to tell us about it and we need to have a clear system for responding. It's important to us that, as far as we can, we resolve issues quickly and to your satisfaction.

The complaints procedure will enable us to manage and process complaints in an efficient and timeous way and enable us to respond to your complaint appropriately. Although we can't promise we will resolve every complaint to everyone's satisfaction, with the help of our complaints procedure, we will endeavour to do so.

Please use the form at the back of this document if you wish to send us your comment, compliment or complaint.



## What is a complaint?

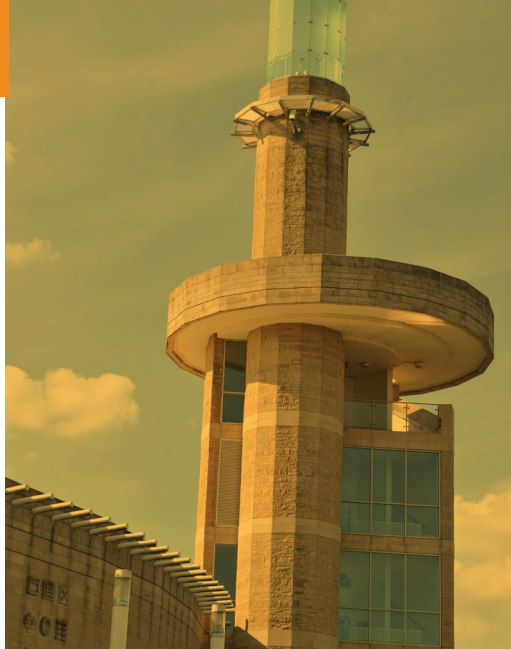
Our definition of a complaint is:

**‘An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of CultureNL.’**

### **A complaint may relate to:**

- failure to provide a service
- inadequate standard of service
- dissatisfaction with our policies or procedures
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- disagreement with a decision where the customer cannot use another procedure (for example an appeal) to resolve the matter
- our failure to follow the appropriate administrative process.

This list does not cover everything and is provided as an example.



### **A complaint is not:**

- a routine first-time request for a service
- a request for compensation
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision
- human resources issues raised by an employee.

This list does not cover everything and is provided as an example.

## Handling anonymous complaints

We value all complaints. This means we treat all complaints including anonymous complaints seriously and will take action to consider them, wherever this is appropriate. Generally, we will consider anonymous complaints if there is enough information in the complaint to enable us to make further enquiries. If, however, an anonymous complaint does not provide enough information to enable us to take further action, we may decide not to pursue it. Any decision not to pursue an anonymous complaint will be authorised by a senior manager. If an anonymous complaint makes serious allegations, we will refer it to a senior officer immediately. If we pursue an anonymous complaint, we will record the issues as an anonymous complaint on the complaints system. This will help to ensure the completeness of the complaints data we record and allow us to take corrective action where appropriate.

## What if you do not wish to complain?

If you have expressed dissatisfaction in line with our definition of a complaint but do not want to complain, we will encourage you to submit your complaint and allow us to deal with it through the complaints handling procedure. This will give us the opportunity to improve services where things have gone wrong. It will also ensure that you are updated on any action taken. If, however, you maintain that you do not wish to complain, we will record the issue as a comment and the matter will be taken no further.

### The Model Complaints Handling Procedure

#### Stage 1 - FRONTLINE RESOLUTION

**For issues that are straightforward and easily resolved, requiring little or no investigation.**

'On-the-spot' apology, explanation, or other action to resolve the complaint quickly, in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

#### Stage 2 - INVESTIGATION

**For issues that have not been resolved at the frontline or that are complex, serious or 'high risk'.**

A definitive response provided within 20 working days following a thorough investigation of the points raised.

Responses signed off by senior management.

Senior management have an active interest in complaints and use information gathered to improve services.

#### INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL REVIEW (Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) or other)

**For issues that have not been resolved by the service provider.**

Complaints progressing to the SPSO will have been thoroughly investigated by the service provider.

The SPSO will assess whether there is evidence of service failure or maladministration not identified by the service provider.

## Who can make a complaint?

Anyone who receives or is affected by our services can make a complaint. Sometimes a customer may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint on their own. In such circumstances we will accept complaints submitted by a third party as long as proof can be provided that the customer has given their personal consent.

## Complaints involving more than one of our services

If your complaint relates to the actions of two or more of our services, we will inform you of which service will take the lead in dealing with your complaint, in such circumstances you will only receive one response covering all issues raised.



## Making a complaint about North Lanarkshire Council

CultureNL is an independent charitable trust operated separately from North Lanarkshire Council. If you wish to make a complaint about any service directly operated by the Council you must do so via the Council's complaints procedure. If North Lanarkshire Council receives a complaint about a service operated by CultureNL, that complaint will be passed on to us and we will deal with it via our complaints procedure.

## The complaints handling procedure

Our complaints handling procedure aims to provide a quick, simple and streamlined process for resolving complaints early and locally by capable, well-trained staff.

Our complaints process provides two opportunities to resolve complaints internally:

- Stage 1: frontline resolution
- Stage 2: investigation



## Stage 1: frontline resolution

Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straightforward complaints that require little or no investigation. Any appropriately trained member of staff may deal with complaints at this stage.

At stage 1 we will seek early resolution by attempting to resolve your complaint at the earliest opportunity and as close to the point of service delivery as possible. This may mean a face-to-face discussion

with you, or asking an appropriate member of staff to deal directly with your complaint.

At stage 1 you can make a complaint in writing, in person, by telephone, by email or online, or by having someone complain on your behalf. We will always consider dealing with your complaint under frontline resolution in the first instance, regardless of how we receive your complaint.

### What will we do when we receive your stage 1 complaint?

- On receiving your complaint we will first decide whether the issue can indeed be defined as a complaint. You may have expressed dissatisfaction about more than one issue or more than one service. If this is the case and we have identified them as complaints we will decide which service will deal with your complaints and process them accordingly.
- When we receive an identified complaint we will record it on our complaints system.
- We will decide whether or not the complaint is suitable for resolution at stage 1. Where we think frontline resolution is appropriate, we will consider four key questions:

#### **1. What exactly is the customer's complaint (or complaints)?**

It is important that we are clear about what you are complaining of. We may need to ask you for more information and probe further to get a full picture.

#### **2. What does the customer want to achieve by complaining?**

At the outset we will clarify the

outcome you expect. Of course, you may not be clear about this, and we may need to probe further to find out what you expect, and whether a satisfactory outcome can be achieved.

#### **3. Can we achieve an immediate resolution, or explain why not?**

We will attempt to achieve an on-the-spot resolution under the stage 1 process or explain why we can't. We will convey such a decision face to face or using an appropriate communication solution. If we communicate an outcome to you face to face, by telephone or by email, we will not write to you as well. A full and accurate record of the decision reached will be conveyed to you and kept on our system.

#### **4. If we cannot resolve your complaint, who can help?**

If we cannot deal with your complaint because, for example, we are unfamiliar with the issues or area of service involved, we will pass details of your complaint to someone who can attempt to resolve it as quickly as possible.



## Timelines

**Stage 1** - Frontline resolution must be completed within five working days, although in practice we would often expect to resolve the complaint much sooner.

We may need to get more information from other services to resolve your complaint at this stage. However, we will respond to you within five working days.

## Extending the timeline

In exceptional circumstances, where there are clear and justifiable reasons for doing so, we may agree an extension of no more than five working days with you. This will only happen when an extension will make it more likely that your complaint will be resolved at the first stage.

## Closing the complaint at stage 1 - frontline resolution

We will ensure that our response to your complaint addresses all areas that we are responsible for and explains the reasons for our decision. Our response will be in the most appropriate medium available, this does not necessarily mean we will respond to you by letter. If circumstances allow we may respond to you in person or via email. We will keep a full and accurate record, on our complaints system, of the decision reached. Once you have been informed of our decision and the complaints system has been updated the complaint will be closed.



## Stage 2: investigation

Not all complaints are suitable for frontline resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints handled at the investigation stage of the complaints handling procedure are typically complex or require a detailed examination before we can state our position. These complaints may already have been considered at the

frontline resolution stage, or they may have been identified from the start as needing immediate investigation. An investigation aims to establish all the facts relevant to the points made in your complaint and to give you a full, objective and proportionate response that represents our final position. Typically a senior member of staff will deal with a stage 2 complaint.

### When will we escalate a complaint to the stage 2 - investigation stage?

A complaint will be escalated to stage 2 - investigation when:

- frontline resolution was tried but you indicate that you remain dissatisfied and request an investigation into the complaint. This may be immediately on communicating the decision at the frontline stage or could be some time later;
- you (the customer) refuse to take part in the frontline resolution process;
- the issues raised are complex and require detailed investigation or the complaint relates to serious, high-risk or high-profile issues.

What will we do when we receive or escalate a complaint for investigation?

We will ensure we are clear from the start of the investigation stage exactly what we are investigating, and ensure that both you and the service understand the investigation's scope. It may be helpful to discuss and confirm these points with you at the outset, to establish why you

are dissatisfied and whether the outcome you are looking for sounds realistic. In discussing the complaint with you we will consider three key questions:

- 1. What specifically is the complaint or complaints?**
- 2. What do you want to achieve by complaining?**
- 3. Are your expectations realistic and achievable?**

Where possible we will clarify what additional information we need to investigate the complaint. You may need to provide more evidence to help us reach a decision. Details of the stage 2 complaint will be recorded on our system. If the investigation stage follows attempted frontline resolution, we will pass on all case notes and associated information to the officer responsible for the investigation, and record that we have done so.



## Timelines

The following deadlines are appropriate to cases at the investigation stage:

- stage 2 complaints will be acknowledged within three working days;
- we will provide a full response to the complaint as soon as possible but not later than 20 working days from the time we received the complaint for investigation.

## Extension to the timeline

Not all investigations will be able to meet the 20 working days deadline however these would be the exception. If there are clear and justifiable reasons for extending the timescale, senior management will set time limits on any extended investigation, as long as you agree. In such circumstances we will keep you updated on the reason for the delay and give you a revised timescale for completion. If you do not agree to an extension but it is unavoidable and reasonable, then senior management will consider and confirm the extension.



## Closing the complaint at stage 2 – investigation

We will let you know the outcome of the investigation, in writing or by a preferred method of communication. Our response to the complaint will address all areas that we are responsible for and explain the reasons for our decision. We will record the decision, and details of how it was communicated to you, on our system. We will also make clear to you that you have:

- the right to ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman ( SPSO) to consider the complaint;
- a time limit for doing so, and;
- how to contact the SPSO.

## Mediation

Some complex complaints, or complaints where customers and other interested parties have become entrenched in their position, may require a different approach to resolution.

Where appropriate we may consider using services such as mediation or conciliation using suitably trained and qualified mediators to try to resolve the matter and to reduce the risk of the complaint escalating further. Mediation will help both parties to understand what has caused the complaint, and so is more likely to lead to mutually satisfactory solutions. If you agree to mediation, revised timescales will need to be agreed.

## Independent external review

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland. If you remain dissatisfied with the service after the complaints process has been completed, you can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint. The SPSO cannot normally look at complaints:

- where you have not gone all the way through the service's complaints handling procedure
- more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about, or
- that have been or are being considered in court.

The SPSO's contact details are:

**SPSO**  
**4 Melville Street**  
**Edinburgh**  
**EH3 7NS**

**SPSO**  
**Freepost EH641**  
**Edinburgh**  
**EH3 0BR**  
**Freephone: 0800 377 7330**

Online contact:  
[www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us)  
Website: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)  
Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>



# Compliments, Comments & Complaints Form

Please use this space to tell us about your compliment, comment or complaint, please provide as much detail as you can:

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Facility \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_

Your Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

We, (CultureNL, the data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998) will use the information you provide on this form to deal with your compliments, comments or complaint and, where appropriate respond to you in accordance with our customer complaints procedure.

\_\_\_\_\_

You can hand this form into a member of staff at a CultureNL venue or post it to:

## Feedback

**CultureNL Ltd**

**Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life**

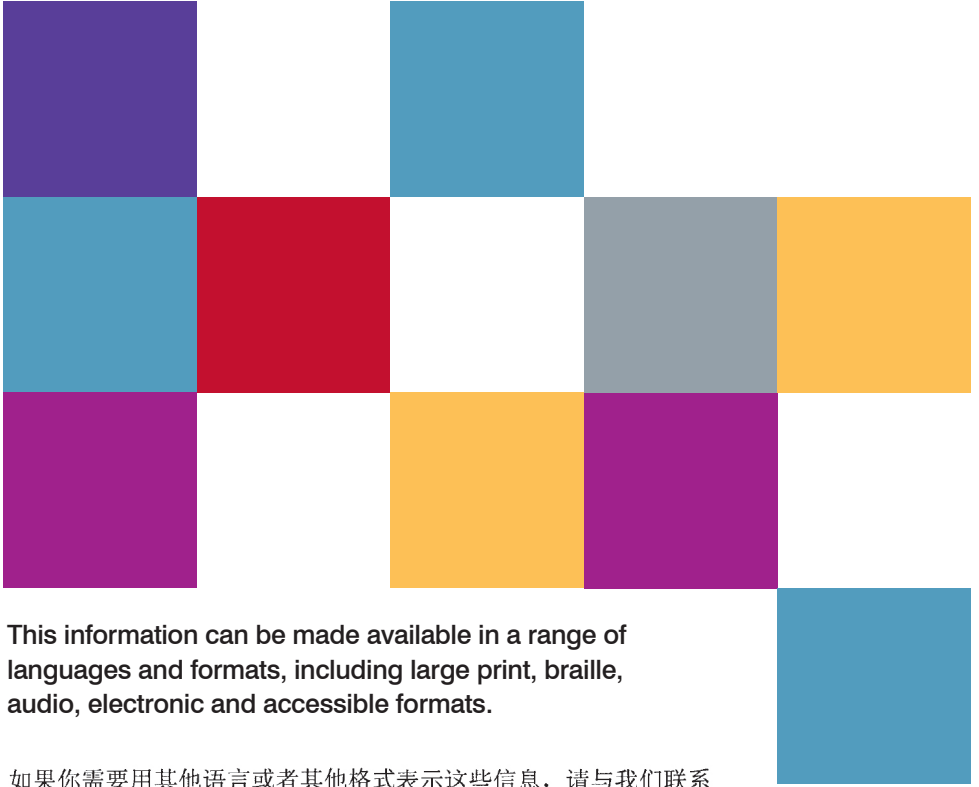
**Heritage Way**

**Coatbridge**

**ML5 1QD**

Alternatively you can e-mail your compliment, comment or complaint to us at: [feedback@culturenl.co.uk](mailto:feedback@culturenl.co.uk)





**This information can be made available in a range of languages and formats, including large print, braille, audio, electronic and accessible formats.**

如果你需要用其他语言或者其他格式表示这些信息，请与我们联系以便讨论你的要求。

Jeżeli potrzebujesz tą informację w innym języku lub formacie, proszę, skontaktuj się z nami, żeby przedyskutować Twoją potrzebę.

اگر آپ کو دوسری زبان میں یہ معلومات درکار ہو تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے مندرجہ ذیل پتہ پر رابطہ کریں

Feedback  
Culture NL  
Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life  
Heritage Way  
Coatbridge  
ML5 1QD  
e. [feedback@culturenl.co.uk](mailto:feedback@culturenl.co.uk)

[www.culturenl.co.uk](http://www.culturenl.co.uk)

supported by

