

COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE



HULL AND GOOLE PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY

SERVICE COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INDEX	Page
1. Purpose of the Policy and Procedure	2
2. Scope	2
3. Contact with the Authority	3
4. The Service Request/Complaint Handling Process	3
5. Local Government Ombudsman	4
6. Scrutiny and Oversight	4
7. Document Review	4

1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- 1.1 To provide a documented and uniform approach to concerns raised regarding the services of this Authority. The policy will be made available via our website, or by post or electronic means upon request.
- 1.2 You can expect the following when contacting the Authority to raise a concern. We will:
- Keep you informed within the timeframes stipulated within part 4 (below)
 - Treat you fairly.
 - Examine your case fully and properly.
 - Be transparent with our findings and provide a full written explanation following the conclusion of our investigation.
 - Take external specialist advice (e.g. legal advice) if the case dictates.
 - Analyse the problem against existing policies and procedures to inform key business decisions to drive improvement and service provision.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Authority recognises that things sometimes go wrong and when they do, the aggrieved person must have somewhere to complain to about our service.
- 2.2 The Authority should provide services that are reliable, meet the needs of our customers and are good value for money.
- 2.3 This policy aims to resolve concerns and complaints raised by individuals effectively and fairly. We have used the complaint handling code provided by the Local Government Ombudsman to help us to define how we will approach concerns that are brought to our attention, namely:

a) As a service request:

'A request that the Authority provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision'.

Service requests are not complaints but may contain expressions of dissatisfaction.

b) As a complaint:

'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals'.

- 2.4 If this is the first time you are reporting an issue to us, we may therefore decide to treat your concerns as a request for service **or** as a complaint, based on the above definitions.
- 2.5 You should make us aware of your concern/complaint within 12 months of the incident happening or within 12 months from when you first became aware

that you had reason to complain. If your complaint is received later than this, we may not be able to fully investigate it. The time limit may be extended at the discretion of the Chief Port Health Inspector where there is a very good reason for the delay. Where late complaints cannot be accepted, we will tell you and explain why.

- 2.6 If there is any other reason why we feel we are unable to accept your complaint, a full written explanation will be provided to you, detailing why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process. You have the right to take this decision to the Ombudsman.

3. **CONTACT WITH THE AUTHORITY**

- 3.1 This Authority will receive your concerns in any manner and via any staff member. You can also contact us by the following means:

- a) By letter addressed to:

The Chief Port Health Inspector
The Hull and Goole Port Health Authority,
257 Hessle Road,
Kingston upon Hull
HU3 4BE

- b) E-mail: admin@hullandgoolepha.gov.uk

- c) Telephone: 01482 324776

- d) In person: at the above office

- e) Via the Authority's website: [Contact Us](#)

- 3.2 You are entitled to have a suitable representative deal with your complaint on your behalf, and/or to be represented or accompanied at any meeting arranged to discuss your concerns with Officers of the Authority.

4. **THE SERVICE REQUEST/COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS**

- 4.1 All concerns/complaints brought to the attention of the Authority will be acknowledged within three working days by a Senior Officer.

- 4.2 If we decide to treat your issue as a service request, it will be responded to within 10 working days. If you are not satisfied with our response, then you may wish to make a complaint about this fact.

- 4.3 Complaints will be dealt with by a Senior Officer and follow a two-stage process. If you are not happy with the initial (stage one) response, your complaint will be escalated to the Chief Port Health Inspector for review. You do not have to provide any reasons to escalate your complaint. However, if you are able to, it will help us to understand why you are still unhappy. We will acknowledge your request for escalation to the stage two process within three working days and aim to provide you with a full response within 20 working days. If the complaint is particularly complex, or if the Chief Port

Health Inspector deems it necessary to obtain specialist advice (e.g. legal advice) or to consult with the joint Authority Board members, an extension to the above timeframe may be required. This will be no longer than a further 20 days and you will be advised if this is the case.

4.4 All service requests and complaints will be responded to in writing and will confirm the following:

- Our understanding of the complaint.
- The decision on the complaint.
- The reasons for any decisions made.
- The details for any remedy offered to put things right.
- Details of any outstanding actions; and
- Details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman if you remain dissatisfied.

4.5 Completion of stage two forms the Authority's final response.

5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN**

5.1 If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you have a right of appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman.

5.2 The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent organisation who will look at complaints about Local Authorities on your behalf.

5.3 The address of the Local Government Ombudsman is: -

PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: <http://www.lgo.org.uk>

6. **SCRUTINY AND OVERSIGHT**

The Chief Port Health Inspector will report on wider learning and improvements from complaints to the Hull and Goole Port Health Authority Board at the quarterly meetings. Members will therefore receive regular information on complaints that will provide insight on the Authority's complaint handling performance.

7. **DOCUMENT REVIEW**

This Policy and Procedure shall be the subject of a review by the Chief Port Health Inspector, at least annually or as necessary to meet any new legislation and/or guidance issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or other recognised Government body.