

LOWER SEVERN (2005) INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Making a Complaint

The Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board is committed to providing high quality services at all times. All our staff work hard to get things right, but sometimes things do go wrong. If you are unhappy with the level of service you have received from the Board and wish to complain, please let us know. By doing this, you will help us to improve our services.

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.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the Board, its standard of services or its staff. This may be the result of action, or lack of action, which affects an individual member of the public or other group or organisation.

If you simply wish to make an enquiry, pass on information or report a problem with the land drainage system in the Board's area (of which we may be unaware); this will not be treated as a complaint.

The Steps to Follow

There are 3 possible stages to the Board's procedure. These are set out below:

Informal

1. Some complaints can be dealt with immediately, and we would like to put things right straightaway if possible, rather than involve you in filling out a form and waiting for a response. Your first step if you are not happy with the way we have dealt with you is to go back to the person at the Board who handled the matter in the first place. This can be by telephone, if you so wish.

Formal

2. If you are still not satisfied with the way your complaint has been dealt with, we will adopt a formal procedure in order to investigate it further. Please fill in the attached form setting out what went wrong and what you think the Board should do to put things right. Please provide as much information about your complaint as possible and include reference numbers, dates of correspondence etc.

3. We will acknowledge your complaint in writing or by phone to confirm that we have understood your concerns correctly. The Clerk will tell you who is dealing with the complaint and how they can be contacted. The person investigating your complaint will be an appropriate senior officer of the Board not involved with the original complaint.
4. We will investigate your complaint and where possible send a written reply to you within 15 working days of our acknowledgement (which we will send to you within two working days). If the matter requires further investigation, we will tell you the reason for the delay and when a full reply will be sent.

Review

5. If you are dissatisfied with the result of the formal investigation referred to above, you may ask the Clerk for the matter to be reviewed. This review will be conducted by a Panel selected by the Chairman of the Governance & Probity Committee in consultation with the Head of Governance. Those serving on the Panel will be Members of the Board who have had no previous involvement with the matter
6. The Review will normally be undertaken within 15 working days of our receiving your request to review the finding of the appropriate Senior Officer. If however the circumstances require longer, you will be so informed and told of the reason for the delay.

The Local Government Ombudsman

If you are still not satisfied with the way we have dealt with your complaint you may refer it to the Local Government Ombudsman, who works independently to the Board, investigating allegations of maladministration causing injustice to the person who has complained. However, the Ombudsman will usually expect you to have tried to get your complaint settled by the Board first. Any complaint to the Ombudsman must involve more than a disagreement with the Board and needs to show that something went wrong and an injustice was caused.

For example it might be maladministration if the Board:

- Made a mistake
- Took too long to do something
- Did not follow its own rules or the law
- Broke its promises
- Treated you unfairly
- Gave you wrong information
- Did not make a decision in the right way – that is, if it
 - did not follow the right procedures when making the decision
 - did not consider all the relevant information
 - wrongly considered relevant information

You might have been caused an injustice by the Board's maladministration if, for example, you:

- Did not get the service or benefit you were entitled to or there was a delay before you got it
- Suffered financial loss
- Were put to a lot of avoidable expense, trouble or inconvenience, or suffered avoidable uncertainty or stress

The Local Government Ombudsman might not investigate your complaint if they consider that the injustice is only slight if the Board has already taken, or is willing to take, satisfactory 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 IDBs. 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 0845 602 1983, or downloading them from their website at www.lgo.org.uk .

Why We Want to Hear From You

Although we want to hear from you if you feel you need to complain, we like to hear any comments you have about our overall service performance. We want to provide the best possible service and your comments will help us to know what we are doing well, and also what we need to improve on.

How to Complain

Print the [complaint form](#), fill it in then send them to us. [Please click here for contact details.](#)