

North East LEP Complaints Procedure

We aim to provide high-quality services however if you have a complaint about our organisation we want to hear about it and we will do our best to put it right.

Our Complaints Procedure has the following goals:

- To deal with complaints promptly, fairly, and effectively;
- To ensure that all complaints are handled in a consistent way;
- To use complaints constructively in the planning and improvement of our services.

When you tell us what you are not happy with, we can try to put things right.

We will approach your complaint in such a way that we can handle it as quickly as possible

Complaints will be treated positively and used as an opportunity to improve the level of service provided. The complaints procedure forms part of North East LEPs corporate management process.

We operate a simple three step approach for ease of handling complaints. This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team to ensure that whatever improvements to our service can be made, they are identified and acted upon.

If a member of the public or third party believes that their complaint fits the description below, they may report their concerns through the whistleblowing policy procedure, which can be accessed on our website [here](#).

Whistleblowing - where an individual who has concerns about a danger, risk, contravention of rules or illegality provides useful information to address this. In doing so they are acting in the wider public interest, usually because it threatens others or impacts on public funds. By contrast, a grievance or private complaint is a dispute about the individuals own position and has no or very limited public interest.

The Procedure

Stage One

Anyone who wishes to complain about any aspect of the service that they have received from the North East LEP are requested to initially contact the employee who they have dealt with and in all cases where they feel the service that should have been provided has not been provided. This may include the following situations:

A service has not been provided to an appropriate standard

- A request for a service has not been answered/actioned
- A complaint that an employee or Board member was rude or unhelpful
- A staff member failed to attend a scheduled appointment.

Contact should be made either in writing or by telephone where the employee will aim to rectify the complaint either:

Immediately over the telephone, or
by meeting with you within five working days

Where the employee is temporarily unavailable to deal with the issue, a Manager will write to you within two working days and inform you of the date when a personal response from the relevant employee can be expected. In any event, this response will be within fourteen days.

In most cases, we would expect that by contacting the relevant employee directly we will be able to rectify the issue. If, however, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of this response, you may progress your complaint more formally to the second stage of this procedure.

Stage Two

If you have spoken to the relevant employee about your complaint but they have not been able to put things right, or you are not happy with the result, the next step available to you is to make a formal complaint.

At this stage, we need the details in writing. You can email us at Info@NELEP.co.uk or you can write a letter to us and send it to:

Chief Executive,
North East Local Enterprise Partnership
1 St James' Gate
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 4AD

A member of the Senior Management Team will be assigned to your case and proceed to investigate the complaint. They will:

- Contact you within five days to discuss the complaint
- Liaise with the employee involved in the initial stage 1 process.
- Write to you within 14 working days with findings of the investigation
- Take the necessary steps to rectify the issue

Stage 3 Independent External Complaint Review



North East Combined Authority – Complaints Procedure

The North East Combined Authority (NECA) is the public accountable body for the North East LEP and should only be approached if you feel your complaint has not been fairly handled and resolved following Stage 2 above. You should write with a request asking the NECA Complaints Officer to review your complaint. Please do this within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of your Stage 2 complaint from the North East LEP. When you contact NECA, please provide your name and address - including your postcode - and your phone number.

Contact us

If you wish to make an appointment to discuss a complaint, please contact the Monitoring Officer by Email: complaints@northeastca.gov.uk In writing to:

Complaints at North East Combined Authority 1 St James Gate, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 4AD

The NECA Complaints Officer will write to you within three working days to let you know:

- **They are reviewing your complaint;**
- **approximately how long it will take to carry out the review; and**
- **when we they will send out a written reply.**

NECA aims to complete Step 3 complaints within 25 working days.

Local Government Ombudsman

You can contact the Local Government Ombudsman about your complaint at any time. However, the Ombudsman usually gives the North East LEP and NECA the opportunity to investigate first.

You can contact the Local Government Ombudsman at:
Local Government Ombudsman PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 OEH
Phone: 0300 061 0614 Fax: 0247 682 0001 Text: 'call back' to 0762 480 3014 Website: www.lgo.org.uk.

Anonymous complaints allegations

The LEP takes all complaints and concerns raised by members of the public and third parties seriously. We will investigate anonymous allegations but remind complainants that when people put their names to an allegation the ability to investigate and therefore reach firm conclusions is strengthened. Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the LEP. When exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised;
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government may request information arising from this process if they have concerns regarding a LEP or have been approached with similar complaints. The expectation is that this information will be provided on an anonymous basis, but it may be necessary to provide personal details to progress a complaint.

Where details are gathered, the LEP will put in place appropriate data protection arrangements in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Confidential Complaints Procedure

The LEP is aware that the organisation's ordinary complaints procedure may not be suitable if someone wants the complaint to remain confidential. If you would like to make a confidential complaint, please write or email to:

*both the North East LEP Executive Director and to one of the current Directors of the North East LEP who's details can be viewed **here***

State that you want the complaint to remain confidential.

Action taken by the North East LEP

The designated complaints officer will raise your concern and investigate the complaint. You can expect the officer to:

- Contact you within 10 working days to acknowledge the complaint and discuss the appropriate course of action.
- Write to you within 28 working days with findings of the investigation. If the investigation has not concluded within 28 working days, the officer will write to you to give reasons for the delay in resolving the complaint.
- Take the necessary steps to rectify the issue.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the complaint or the complaint involves those responsible for the confidential complaints procedure:

You can escalate your concerns through other organisations mentioned in the normal complaints procedure e.g. the LEP's Accountable Body which is the North East Combined Authority who has its own confidentiality procedures.

If you are either unable to raise the matter with the LEP or you are dissatisfied with the action taken you can report it direct to the Cities and Local Growth Unit in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, at the following email address:

LEPPolicy@communities.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to LEP Policy Deputy Director, Cities and Local Growth Unit, Fry Block, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF. You should clearly mark your email or letter as "Official - complaints".