

Garff Parish District Commissioners' Complaints Policy and Procedure

30th September 2020

Complaints Policy

Garff Parish Commissioners aims to provide efficient and effective public services. We accept that any organisation providing a service will, on occasion, receive complaints. This complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled promptly, fairly, consistently and wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Complaints are an important way for the management of this organisation to be accountable to the public and provide valuable prompts to review our performance and the conduct of people that work within and for it.

A complaint arises when we fail to meet one of our standards, or if someone is dissatisfied with something we have done or failed to do.

We will endeavour to acknowledge all complaints that require investigation within 3 days of receipt.

Complaints Procedure

How to complain

You can make a complaint: in person at the Commissioners' or Housing Office, by telephone or in writing (including electronic messages).

Anonymous complaints will be considered carefully and action taken if appropriate.

It is vital to this process that your expectations and/or your desired outcome are stated clearly.

The first stage is to make your complaint directly to the person that you have been dealing with. In most cases this will resolve the issue quickly and without escalating your complaint any further.

If you wish to speak to someone else or you are still dissatisfied you should contact either the Clerk to the Commissioners or if the matter relates to Housing, the Housing Manager.

Should the matter relate to either of these people, the complaint can be made in writing addressed to the Chairman at the address below but marked "For the consideration only of the Chairman, Private and Confidential".

Should you wish to contact the Chairman by phone, the contact details are shown on the website, or contact the office at the phone number given below who will assist you.

The Clerk/Manager/Chairman will take a note of your complaint, investigate it and report back to you in writing within 15 working days. If a detailed reply is not possible within that period you will be contacted with an explanation and advised when a full response will be given.

In the case of a more complex complaint, which necessitates discussion by the Board of Commissioners or outside parties, we undertake to keep the customer informed at least on a monthly basis.

Your complaint, in whatever format, can be sent to:

Mr Peter Burgess
Clerk
Garff Parish Commissioners
Commissioners' Office
35 New Road
Laxey
Isle of Man
IM4 7BG

Tel 861241
admin@garff.im

Mrs Julie Mattin
Housing Manager
Cooil Roi Office
Glen Road
Laxey
IM4 7NT

862307
cooilroi@garff.im

The format of your Complaint

Your complaint should contain the following information: -

- Your name
- Your address
- Your email
- The exact nature of your complaint.
- The identity of the staff member(s) involved (if any)
- Whether there were any witnesses and details as to how they can be contacted.
- Proof of any damage or injury caused.
- Your desired expectations and/or your desired outcome of submitting this complaint

Making a Complaint in Person

If a customer visits the Office and registers an enquiry or complaint in person, the staff member or members directly involved will be requested to initially deal with the complaint.

In most cases this will resolve the issue quickly and without escalating your complaint any further. However, should further specialist knowledge be required, the Authority will try to provide an appropriate member of staff who is qualified to answer the enquiry or complaint at the time of the first visit. This would usually be the Clerk/Housing Manager.

Depending on the nature of the issue, the member of staff may set out his understanding of your complaint in writing and ask you to sign it so there is a written record of the matter.

Making a Complaint by telephone

If a customer would like to make a complaint by telephone, they should initially ask for the member of staff providing the service, if they are not available, and the customer wishes to deal with them directly, we will ask the customer to leave their details and arrange for the staff member to return their call.

However, if the customer wishes to speak to a senior officer, they should ask for the Clerk/Manager who will then investigate.

Depending on the nature of the issue, the Clerk/Manager may set out his understanding of your complaint in writing and ask you to sign and return it so there is a written record of the matter.

Making a Complaint in writing

If the customer would like to make an enquiry or complaint in writing by letter or email, we will endeavour to give a written acknowledgement within 3 working days.

The enquiry or complaint will then be dealt with according to the three stage procedure set out below

General Data Protection Regulations 2018

By submitting a complaint, you consent to Garff Commissioners sharing details of your complaint with other parties 'in confidence', where necessary, in order to make those involved aware of the nature of the complaint; this will also enable thorough investigation and encourage an effective resolution to the matter.

[Please note: Where an individual/s who is/are subject of a complaint, the Local Authority are advised by the 'Information Commissioner' that it is 'good practice' to redact any written complaint that is shown to those parties. This procedure will be followed in accordance with this principle unless express written permission is provided by the complainant.]

Procedure and Timescale

1. Once we have received a complaint in writing we will acknowledge in writing within three working days indicating that the Commissioners' Complaints Procedure will be followed. We may request a meeting or some more information from you in order to complete the relevant investigation. If your complaint is about a particular incident or individual we may also need to speak to any witnesses or those directly involved. The investigation will always be carried out by an independent person who is not party to the complaint.

We will consider your views and all the evidence we collect and let you know the outcome of our findings within 14 calendar days. If a resolution is likely to take longer than 14 days, you will be kept informed about the relevant delays and timescales.

2. If you are not completely satisfied with the outcome of stage one of our complaint process, you must let us know within 14 calendar days from receipt of the outcome. You must detail the full reasons for your continued dissatisfaction and let us have as much new or additional information as possible to enable us to carry out a further investigation. Any further investigation will be carried out by an independent person who has not had any involvement in stage one of the process.

We will re-consider your views, any previous evidence, any new evidence which has been presented and let you know the outcome within 28 calendar days. If a response will take longer than 28 days, you will be informed about the relevant delays and timescales.

3. Should you still be dissatisfied after the completion of the previous 2 steps, you should write to The Chairman of the Board within 14 calendar days of the date of the previous response. You must state the full reasons for your continued dissatisfaction and let us have as much new or additional information and evidence as possible to enable us to carry out a further investigation.

We will re-consider any further written representations, previous information, new evidence and let you know the outcome within 28 days. If a response will take longer than 28 days, you will be informed about the relevant delays and timescales.

The outcome of stage 3 is the final stage that will be undertaken by the Commissioners.

Procedure if you are dissatisfied with the investigation and final decision made by the Commissioners:

Any complaint must first be made in writing to the Garff Commissioners and they must be given an opportunity to take what they consider to be all reasonable steps to deal with the complaint; if the complainant remains dissatisfied, she or he may then complain to the Tynwald Commissioner for Administration within six months of the Commissioners' final decision.

Complaints to the Tynwald Commissioner have to be in writing, so you should use either of these methods to make contact:-

By email ombudsman@parliament.org.im

By post - Office of the Clerk of Tynwald, Legislative Buildings, Finch Road, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 3PW.

Addendum: Unreasonable or vexatious complaints

Your complaint may not be dealt with if it is felt that is unreasonable or persistent, that is, time consuming to manage and interferes with proper consideration of the complaint or vexatious. Some examples are:

- Refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of help.
- Refusing to cooperate with the complaints investigation process.
- Refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure.
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
- Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeking to have them replaced.
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Denying or changing statements made at an earlier stage.
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information at a later stage.
- Raising many detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are all answered.
- Submitting falsified documents from themselves or others.
- Adopting a 'scatter gun' approach: pursuing parallel complaints on the same issue with various organisations.

- Making excessive demands on the time and resources of staff with lengthy phone calls, emails to numerous Commissioners staff, or detailed letters every few days, and expecting immediate responses.
- Submitting repeat complaints with minor additions/variations the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints.
- Refusing to accept the decision; repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence.

You will be advised in writing that your complaint has been deemed in this way.