

LEICESTERSHIRE

FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

SERVICE PROCEDURE

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES

COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE AUTHORITY AND MEMBERS OF THE SERVICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

AUDIT OF AMENDMENTS

Date	Paragraph Changed	Brief details of alterations	Approved by
April 2009		First issued (previously Concerns and Complaints procedure)	SMT
15.10.09	14 - 29	Equality monitoring information to be collected by the Duty Strategic Manager	SMT
15.10.09	Appendix C	Equality monitoring questionnaire updated to include 6 protected characteristics	SMT
18.11.13	Appendix B	Equality monitoring information removed from survey questionnaire.	SMT
June 2014	Whole document	Reviewed and updated to include communication via social media	SMT
Jan. 2015	13	The Complaint (against a Member) will be investigated, improvement actions determined and agreed with the relevant Area Manager or Director.	
	25	Added: to investigate the Complaint and collect improvement actions where applicable.	
	28	Confidentiality sentence removed (duplication) and replaced with agreement with Area Manager of improvement actions and dates	
	33	The collection of improvement actions and alert setting added	
	34 – 36	Merged from 3 into 2 paragraphs	
	36	Re-written to describe improvement action alert and checking process with relevant Area Manager.	
	Appendix A	Complaint Form section 5: Improvement actions section added	
Feb 2015	1	“, address and learn from” added	
	4	Added note re. actions to improvement	
	16	Post references changed	
	24	Grammar improvement	
	Form	Clarified so that Improvements actions section separated from main body of form	
	Throughout	A number of minor changes such as capitalisation and punctuation	

LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

POLICY STATEMENT

1. It is the policy of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service to take seriously all Complaints made by members of the public and to thoroughly investigate, address and learn from them.
2. All Complaints will be taken seriously and followed up by an investigation. Where the complainant does not wish to provide their contact details, the Complaint will still be processed and, an investigation will take place where enough evidence is available to substantiate the Complaint.
3. All Complaints will be investigated, in the first instance, by the Duty Strategic Manager. However, an investigator can be appointed by the Duty Strategic Manager to carryout an investigation. It is the responsibility of the Duty Strategic manager to ensure that the Complaint is satisfactorily resolved.
4. Whilst the Service is committed to providing a quality service and continually strives to meet public expectations, from time to time things can go wrong or are perceived by others to have gone wrong.

When this happens we will -

- Treat the Complaint and the complainant with respect and dignity and deal with them fairly and sympathetically
 - Deal with the Complaint swiftly, thoroughly, impartially and confidentially
 - Adopt a positive approach by using the Complaint as an opportunity to take actions to improve the service we provide
 - Provide an effective response and ensure, where appropriate, the cause of the Complaint is addressed
5. Complaints can be a useful source of information about how others see us and how we are serving our customers. Whether the Complaint is justified or not, the person making the Complaint can feel aggrieved with the Combined Fire Authority, the Fire and Rescue Service as a whole, the management of the Service and individuals within the Service. Dealing

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with a Complaint courteously and effectively can do much to restore the complainant's confidence in the Service.

DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

6. There should be a clear understanding of what constitutes a Complaint.

For the purposes of this procedure a Complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet about the actions, decisions or apparent failings of the Fire and Rescue Service”

Complaints from employees of LFRS relating to any aspect of their employment ARE NOT included in this definition. Such Complaints are considered to be “Grievances” and ARE dealt with under that procedure.

Some examples of Complaints may include –

- A firefighter was rude to me whilst attending an incident
 - A fire appliance caused damage to my vehicle / property whilst travelling on blue lights
7. A Complaint should not be confused with a concern. Concerns relate mainly to fire safety issues at premises (e.g. padlocked fire doors in a shop, night club or school). Complaints, therefore, generally relate to some aspect of the management of the Service, conduct of an individual or the LFRS infrastructure or facilities.

RECEIPT OF A COMPLAINT

8. All personnel receiving a Complaint must adhere to the following procedures –

- When receiving a Complaint via telephone, transfer the call to Information Management (Service Control out of normal office hours). If you are unable to transfer the call, complete sections 1 – 3 of the form ‘Register of Complaint’ (Appendix A) as fully as possible and pass the details electronically to Information Management or Service Control out of hours as soon as practicable. (The form is available on SharePoint)
- When receiving a Complaint via written communication (including fax, email and social media) you should send the written communication to Information Management, where possible, within 24 hours of receipt

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- When receiving a Complaint via a personal visit, complete sections 1 – 3 of the form 'Register of Complaint' as fully as possible and ensure the form is emailed to Information Management within 24 hours
 - When completing sections 1 – 3 of the 'Register of Complaint' form please remember to specify the nature of the communication
 - If you don't have a form and cannot get access to one, you must try to collect, at minimum, the information mentioned in paragraphs 9-11 below
9. Obtain the complainant's full name, address (including postcode), telephone number and e-mail address if applicable.
 10. Summarise the details of the communication – i.e. why is the Complaint being raised. Make notes and be sure of all the facts, particularly dates. Continue if necessary on a separate sheet of paper.
 11. Include the date and time of receipt of the Complaint.

COMPLAINT AGAINST AN ELECTED MEMBER OF THE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

12. A Complaint received in respect of a Member of the Combined Fire Authority shall be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraphs 8 to 11 inclusive except that:
 - The name of the Member shall not be entered on to the Information Management system and the file named only as "Complaint against a Member".
 - No Complaints shall be dealt with out of hours.
 - The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (or in his absence the Deputy Chief Fire and Rescue Officer) shall be informed that a Complaint has been received within 24 hours of receipt.
 - Any Complaint received will be referred to the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer (or in his absence the Deputy Monitoring Officer) on the next working day for action.
13. The Complaint will be investigated, improvement actions determined and agreed Solicitor and Monitoring officer and CFO **with the relevant Area Manager or Director.**

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DURING
NORMAL WORKING HOURS**

14. Complete sections 1 – 4 of the 'Register of Complaint' form adhering to the guidance contained in the Receipt of a Complaint section on page 2.
15. Issue the Complaint/case with an identification number.
16. Identify the Duty Strategic Manager for the day and advise them of the Complaint by telephone before forwarding the completed Complaint form and any associated documentation to them via email. If the Complaint is against a member of personnel who is at Duty Strategic Manager level, then before proceeding, refer the matter to the manager responsible for Information Management for guidance, alternately, refer to the Head of Service.
17. A Complaint must always be investigated at Strategic Manager level or above.
18. Send an acknowledgement to the complainant within five working days of receipt of the Complaint.
19. Complete electronic log on SharePoint and attach completed Complaint form and all additional correspondence for audit purposes and in preparation for the compiling of statistics.
20. Complaints made out of hours will normally come through Service Control but will be logged by the information management team. In which case, upon receipt of the form 'Register of Complaint' from Service Control, issue Complaint with next available identification number and proceed as from item 16 above.

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY SERVICE CONTROL - OUT OF
HOURS**

21. Complete sections 1 – 4 of the 'Register of Complaint' form adhering to the guidance contained in the Receipt of a Complaint section on page 2.
22. Inform the Duty Strategic Manager and forward them a copy of the completed form 'Register of Complaint' together with a copy of any relevant correspondence.

23. Email the completed form 'Register of Complaint' and any relevant correspondence to Information Management.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE SERVICE STRATEGIC MANAGER
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24. Complete Section 5 of the 'Register of Complaint' form – decide upon How the Complaint should be investigated and progressed:

Depending on the seriousness of the Complaint -

- When a Complaint is against an individual (member of staff) you should inform their immediate line manager, Head of Department or Director
 - Consider if any evidence needs to be impounded before proceeding further
 - Consider any potential for Corporate Risk, and if any, ensure to take immediate steps to reduce the risk.
25. Contact the complainant to discuss how the Complaint will be dealt with offering to see them in person. Investigate the Complaint by talking to those involved as appropriate. During your investigation, record any actions that might be taken to improve services and, possibly prevent similar Complaints in the future.
 26. Complete equality monitoring questionnaire when appropriate/or as part of the gathering of further details/information. This may be in person or via the phone or email. Remember to introduce this part separately so that the complainant has the opportunity to tell us about any adjustments we might need to make in investigating their complaint. An example is given below;

"Thank you for providing us with details of your Complaint. We will investigate this and provide you with a written response within 10 working days. I would also like to ask a few questions that will help us to improve access to the services we provide. Some questions may be quite sensitive." Are you happy to proceed?
 27. Forward all completed equality monitoring questionnaire to the Head of Human Resources in a sealed envelope marked private & confidential.

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28. Agree any improvement actions and their dates with the relevant Area Manager and put these on the Complaint Form in Section 5.
29. Forward a copy of the completed 'Complaint' form to Information Management at Service Headquarters.
30. Ensure that a written response is sent to the complainant within ten (10) working days of receipt of the Complaint.
31. Ensure that a copy of the written response is forwarded to Information Management for monitoring purposes.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR

32. Receive a copy of the final response.
33. Close the Complaint and attach any relevant correspondence and set alerts for any improvement actions
34. Send a customer survey (Appendix B) to the complainant once the Complaint has been closed. Receive completed complainant survey and file accordingly.
35. Produce a Complaints synopsis on a monthly basis for Strategic Planning and Performance.
36. Generate and track alerts on the date any improvement action is to be completed by and check with the relevant Area Manager that the action has been completed. If so, the action will be closed off, if not, an appropriate reminder will be agreed with the Area Manager and set for Information Management to repeat the reminder.
If all improvements actions have been completed or there were none, Information Management will close off the Complaint.

COMPLAINANT REDRESS

37. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Complaint, the Complaint will be referred to a second stage.
38. At the second stage, the Complaint and the investigation thereof will be reviewed by a Director.

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39. If the outcome remains the same, the complainant will be asked to refer the Complaint to the “Local Government Ombudsman”.

CONFIDENTIALITY

40. The Information Management Coordinator will ensure that all documentation regarding Complaints is kept in a secure location.
41. All persons who are involved in handling a Complaint from conception to closure will not discuss a Complaint with a third party.
42. Misuse of any information acquired during an investigation could result in disciplinary action.
43. Information/documentation pertaining to a Complaint which is requested by person/s not directly involved in the investigation will be refused.
44. Information to a third party will only be released on the authority of a Director.

APPENDIX A – COMPLAINT FORM

ID NUMBER _____

LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

REGISTER OF COMPLAINT

1. PERSONAL DETAILS OF COMPLAINANT			
Name:			
Address:			
Post Code:		Tel. No:	

2. DETAILS OF COMPLAINT	DATE
<p>Ask the caller - In order to ensure we deal with your concern sensitively and appropriately, are there any adjustments that we need to make in order to communicate with you effectively. (For example large print; or your first language is not English)</p>	

3. METHOD OF RECEIPT		
In Writing <input type="checkbox"/>	By Telephone <input type="checkbox"/>	In Person <input type="checkbox"/>

To be completed by Information Management / Fire Control		
4. DUTY STRATEGIC MANAGER INFORMED		
Name of Strategic Manager informed:		
Complaint I D Number:		
Date and Time:		
Date Acknowledgement Card Sent: (Within 5 working days of receipt of Complaint)		
Name of person completing Section 4:		
To be completed by Duty Strategic Manager		
5. ACTION		
Personal Visit by Officer required: YES / NO		
Name of Visiting Officer:	<input type="text"/>	Date of Visit: <input type="text"/>
Investigation required: YES / NO		
Nominated Officer:	<input type="text"/>	Date notified: <input type="text"/>
Nominated Officer to draft written response: YES / NO		
Full Investigation Report required by Officer on duty by:	<input type="text"/> (Give date)	
Deadline date for full written response: (10 working days from date of receipt of Complaint)	<input type="text"/>	
No action necessary – Duty Strategic Manager to do full written response.		
Lessons Learned / Recommendations identified for future improvements? YES/NO		
If YES please specify below what actions have been or will be taken, the date of those actions and the Area Manager who has agreed to ensure they are taken:		
Actions (to be) taken to improve future performance	Date	Area Manager resp.

GUIDANCE NOTES

COMPLAINTS

- **To complain = to express resentment or displeasure**
- Where the Service has stated a level of service provision and it fails to meet those standards, and a member of the public identifies this failure to meet the standard, then this constitutes a Complaint.
- The definition of a Complaint may be applied to allegations of abusive behaviour, discrimination, racism or other forms of unwarranted behaviour such as physical abuse.
- If it were alleged that a member of the Service, through their actions, caused damage to private property or to an individual(s), then this would also constitute a Complaint.

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APPENDIX B – COMPLAINT / CONCERN SURVEY

COMPLAINT/ CONCERN SURVEY

Name:	Complaint/ Concern ID No:
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(Please tick the appropriate boxes)

1.	Would you describe your contact with the Service as 'making a Complaint' or 'expressing a concern'?	Complaint	
		Concern	

2.	How did you contact the Service to make your Complaint or express your concern?	By letter	
		By telephone	
		By e-mail	
		In person	
		Other	

3.	Thinking about the person dealing with your Complaint or concern, would you agree or disagree that they were:	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
		Easy to reach				
		Polite				
		Friendly				
	Helpful					

4.	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the speed in which your Complaint or concern was dealt	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know

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	with?					
5.	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the response received?	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know

Continued overleaf.....

6.	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way in which your Complaint was handled?	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know

7.	If you were dissatisfied, why was this the case? (Please detail)					
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8.	Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service operates?	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know

**Thank you for your help in completing this survey.
If you require further information on Fire Safety issues, please contact Information Management on 0116 2872241, Fax 0116 2311180, email infomanagement@lfrs.org**

APPENDIX C – COMPLAINT STATISTICS QUESTIONNAIRE

ID Number _____

Equality Monitoring Questionnaire

Once the details of the Complaint have been recorded it is suggested that the following questions are posed (If the complainant is clearly in an agitated state then judgment should be used as to whether the questions will aggravate the situation)

In order to ensure we deal with your Complaint sensitively and appropriately, are there any adjustments that we need to make in order to communicate with you effectively. (For example large print; or your first language is not English)

We need to carry out equality and diversity monitoring in order to meet our statutory obligations and to ensure that the service we provide is fair and accessible to all our communities.

Please help us to do this by answering the following questions.

All answer you provide are confidential and will only be used for monitoring purposes, this will not affect the outcome of your Complaint.

Gender Male Female

Age Range

Under 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	18 – 24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 – 39	<input type="checkbox"/>	40 – 59	<input type="checkbox"/>
60 – 74	<input type="checkbox"/>	75 and over	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ethnic Origin

<u>White</u>		<u>Black and Black British</u>	
British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	African	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Any other white background	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other black background	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Mixed</u>		<u>Chinese or other ethnic group</u>	
White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Any other mixed background	<input type="checkbox"/>		

<u>Asian or Asian British</u>			
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to specify	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Any other Asian background	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Religious belief / Faith

Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

Disability

Do you have a disability? Yes No

Sexual Orientation

Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay / Lesbian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heterosexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Once we have formally responded to the Complaint you will be sent a questionnaire asking for feedback on how we handled your Complaint. You will be asked to confirm your personal details again at that point.

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire.

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