

# **WATER MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE**

# **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

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## **GOVERNANCE**

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**Review date: December 2020**

**To be reviewed every 5 years**

**Next review date: December 2025**

**Reviewed by: WMA Consortium Management Committee**

### **Adopted by:**

Broads Internal Drainage Board

East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board

King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board

Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board

South Holland Internal Drainage Board

Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland Internal Drainage Board

Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### 1. NEED TO COMPLAIN?

- (a) The WMA has a procedure for dealing with complaints from members of the public and others. Despite our best endeavours, we recognise that things may not always meet your expectations. 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.
- (b) We want to hear from you if you are unhappy with our services and want to make a complaint.

### 2. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

- (a) A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, action or lack of action made by the Board or its staff, contractors etc., affecting an individual member of the public or other group or organisation.

### 3. STEPS TO FOLLOW

- (a) Some complaints can be dealt with immediately, and we would like to put things right straight away if possible, rather than involve you in filling out a form and waiting for a response. So, if you are not happy with the way we have dealt with your complaint, your first step is to go back to the person in the WMA who handled the matter in the first place.
- (b) If you are still not satisfied with the way your complaint has been dealt with, then we will adopt a formal procedure in order to investigate it further. Please fill in the [official complaints 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. Your personal information in the form will only be used to respond to your complaint and will be held in accordance with GDPR 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018. Specifically, personal information is never shared with any third party organisation and is managed in accordance with the Water Management Alliance's Data Protection Policy.
- (c) We will acknowledge your official complaint in writing or by phone to confirm that we have understood your concerns correctly. We will tell you who is dealing with the complaint and how they can be contacted. The person investigating your complaint will always be the Board's Chief Executive or a senior member of the WMA.
- (d) 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 you within seven 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.
- (e) If you are not satisfied with our reply, please let us know why. If possible, we will investigate further and, where necessary, review your concerns at a more senior level: by the WMA Chairman, the Board's Chairman or by the Member Board itself. We will keep you informed

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of progress and provide a further reply within 15 working days of will keep you informed of progress and provide a further reply within 15 working days of receiving your letter.

- (f) If you feel that we have failed to secure the efficient working and maintenance of our drainage system, you can also request the Environment Agency to exercise its supervisory powers and review your complaint. If the Environment Agency considers it to be appropriate, they may give us such general or special directions, which we will consider. If we fail to act on such directions, you can ask the Environment Agency to exercise its powers to carryout works on our behalf, where in their opinion land is injured or is likely to be injured by flooding or inadequate drainage as a direct result of us not exercising our powers, in whole or in part.

## 4. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

- (a) If you remain dissatisfied with the way we have dealt with your complaint you may refer it to the [Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman \(LGO\)](#), who look at individual complaints about organisations providing local public services. The LGO works independently to the WMA and its Member Boards, 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;
- gave you wrong information; or
- 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; or
  - wrongly considered irrelevant information.

- (b) 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; or
- were put to a lot of avoidable expense, trouble or inconvenience, or suffered avoidable uncertainty or stress.

- (c) The Local Government Ombudsman might not investigate your complaint if they consider that the injustice is only slight, or if the Board has already taken, or is willing to take, satisfactory action to resolve it.

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- (d) 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 or by downloading them from their website.

## 5. WHY WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU?

- (a) 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.

## 6. IF YOU WISH TO COMPLAIN

- (a) You can email the [Complaint Form](#) from our website or print and submit it to the office:

Water Management Alliance  
Pierpoint House  
28 Horsley's Fields  
King's Lynn  
Norfolk  
PE30 5DD

Alternatively, you can complete the Complaint Form online and send it to us by email.