



# **NORTHUMBERLAND INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (NIFCA)**

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

We are committed to providing an exemplary customer service at all times. If you do have a complaint however, then please let us know promptly. We will be unable to deal with complaints which fall outside a twelve month time limit from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining.

Complaints can only be investigated if they are of a specific nature and properly documented with full details of the complaint including dates of the occurrence and names of any staff involved where possible. Anonymous complaints cannot be accepted, and you will need to supply your name, address and telephone number, so that we can contact you to conduct our investigation.

Complaints against other bodies or members of the public cannot be investigated by NIFCA.

### **What you can expect from us**

At each stage of the process we will normally acknowledge receipt of your concerns within ten working days giving you a named contact point and telephone number for your complaint.

We will then strive to provide you with a full response to your complaint within 20 working days.

### **Stage 1**

In most cases we would do our utmost to resolve your complaint immediately. So please make our staff aware of your complaint as soon as possible and we will do all we can to quickly resolve it to your satisfaction. Please ensure you confirm:-

- Any dates when the subject matter of the complaint occurred
- The detail of the complaint and why you are not satisfied with the initial outcome; and
- What you would like to be done about it.

### **Stage 2**

If we have not resolved your complaint at stage one you can contact the Chief Executive Officer by telephone, post or email. Please explain the full details of your complaint, and the Chief Executive Officer will carry out a thorough investigation into your concerns. Should it be necessary the Chief Executive Officer or a Senior Officer will arrange to meet with you to resolve the complaint

### **Stage 3**

If we have not resolved your complaint at Stage 2 or if your complaint is against the

Chief Executive, or for other reasons it is inappropriate for him to investigate the complaint, your complaint should be addressed to the Chairman of the Authority who will investigate your complaint and respond as referred to above.

All complaints should be addressed to the Authority office at 8 Ennerdale Road, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 4RT, telephone: 01670 797676, email: [nifca@nifca.gov.uk](mailto:nifca@nifca.gov.uk).

### **Help with complaints**

If you need help to make a complaint you can ask a friend, relative or local Councillor to help you. Or you may wish to be assisted by someone from an organisation such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Anyone acting for you has the same rights as you have.

### **Notification to insurers**

Any complaint that involves negligence or a potential claim against professional indemnity insurance is brought to the attention of the insurers as soon as possible by NIFCA

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent that is necessary for the investigation or for legal or insurance purposes. The information you provide will only be held for the purposes of investigation, administration and processing and will not be passed on to third parties except where necessary for legal or insurance purposes.

### **NIFCA Policy**

As part of our commitment to public accountability we will make a written record of any complaint and retain all documents and correspondence generated by the complaint for a period of six years.

### **If you are still not satisfied**

If you are still unhappy with the outcome of your complaint then you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. You should do this within 12 months of when you first knew about the matter you are complaining about. Write to: Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH; Tel: 0845 602 1983, email: [advice@lgo.org.uk](mailto:advice@lgo.org.uk)

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