



NATIONAL
HERITAGE
MEMORIAL
FUND



Making a complaint



Awarding funds from

The National Lottery®

Introduction

If you want to make a complaint about the Heritage Lottery Fund or the National Heritage Memorial Fund, we have a procedure for you to use which we explain in this leaflet.

Making a complaint will not affect, in any way, the level of service you receive from us. For example, if your complaint is about an application for funding, this will not affect your chances of getting a grant from us in the future.

If you have any particular communication needs, or need information in other languages or in another format, please contact the Customer information team.

What can I complain about?

You can complain if you think that:

- 'maladministration' has taken place (for example, if we have delayed, made mistakes in or failed to follow the procedures in our application process);
- we have failed to give you access to information or have given you incorrect advice or information;
- we have not treated you politely; or
- we have discriminated against you or not treated you fairly.

If your complaint is about an application for funding, we can only look at your application again if:

- we discover (through dealing with a complaint) that we did not follow the published procedures for assessing your application;
- you can show that we have misunderstood a significant part of your application; or
- you can show that we did not take notice of relevant information.

Making a complaint will not affect the level of service you receive from us.

You may not be sure what information you should include or how best to set out your complaint. You should set out the facts as clearly as possible, in a logical order. Remember to include important details and dates where possible. We can give you information about how we will process your complaint. Our contact details are given in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this leaflet.

We will do our best to keep all complaints confidential. However, we may need to release limited information so we can investigate the issues you have raised. Under the Freedom of Information Act, we may also have to release certain information if we are asked for it. You can get information on the Freedom of Information Act from the Information Commissioner's Office. You will find contact details in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this leaflet.

We will treat you with respect, and we expect you to treat our staff in the same way.

What you cannot complain about

You may be disappointed if we turn down your application for funding, but you cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against our decision on giving a grant if we have followed our decision-making process correctly.

You cannot complain about our published policies or any government policy. If you have any comments about our policies, send these to our Customer information team.

Do not use this procedure to make a complaint about any fraud you think has taken place. You should report this to our finance department or the police.

How do I make a complaint?

Stage one

If you are not satisfied with the service you have received, contact the office you first dealt with. They will try to put things right.

We hope that we can settle complaints as quickly as possible in this way.

You will receive a response to your complaint at stage one.

Stage two

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you can take this further by contacting our chief executive.

Please tell us:

- what happened;
- when it happened;
- who dealt with you; and
- what you would like us to do to put things right.

You must do this within four weeks of receiving our response to stage one.

Within three working days of receiving your complaint we will contact you to say that we have received it. We will also tell you how you can contact the person who is dealing with your complaint and when you can expect a reply.

In most cases, you will receive a reply within 10 working days. If we cannot give a full reply in this time, we will tell you why and when you are likely to receive it.

If your complaint is about the way we have used our powers to make, refuse or manage funding, you can then move on to stage three. If your complaint is about the way we carry out any other aspect of our business, we will let you know about any alternatives available to you. In our response to stage two, we will tell you whether stage three is open to you.

The independent complaints reviewer hears both sides of the complaint.

Stage three

If you are not satisfied with the chief executive's reply, you can refer your complaint to the independent complaints reviewer (ICR).

The ICR is unbiased and hears both sides of the complaint.

The ICR is not part of our organisation and their investigations and recommendations are independent. You can ask the ICR to look at your complaint, or our chief executive can ask them to do this. There is no charge for using the ICR. The ICR's office will contact you within five working days of receiving your complaint.

The ICR has the power to decide whether or not to investigate a complaint, and they will explain their reasons if they decide not to investigate it.

If the ICR investigates your complaint and finds that it is justified, they will recommend ways for us to put things right, and how to prevent a similar situation in future. Our usual practice is to publish ICR's reports on our website, but we will only do this with your permission.

The ICR will report within three months, and usually more quickly.

We will normally make any changes the ICR recommends to our current procedures as quickly as possible.

The ICR cannot consider complaints that have not gone through the procedure set out in this document. If you want the ICR to consider your complaint, you must contact them, within four weeks of receiving our chief executive's reply.

The ICR cannot reverse funding decisions or make comments or changes to our legal responsibilities and policies on awarding grants.

To contact the ICR see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this leaflet.

Other ways to make a complaint

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)

One of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's role is to consider complaints that public bodies have not acted properly or fairly or have provided a poor service.

By law, the Ombudsman is independent of the Government and the civil service, and has wide powers to investigate.

The Ombudsman does not normally investigate complaints if they have not been through our complaints procedures first.

The Ombudsman's services are free. You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman – see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this leaflet.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland. If you are still not satisfied after following the complaints procedure, you can ask the SPSO if they can look at your complaint.

SPSO cannot normally look at complaints:

- more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about; or
- that have been or are being considered in court.

You can get an explanatory leaflet about SPSO – see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this leaflet.

Judicial review

A judicial review is where a judge examines your complaint to see whether we have behaved improperly. The judge cannot rule that we must change a funding decision, but they can ask us to reconsider our decision.

We welcome comments and suggestions as these can help us improve our services.

Freedom of information

Our publication scheme gives details of what information we make available to the public as a matter of course.

If you want information that we do not include in our publication scheme, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you the right to ask us for it.

Under the Act, we must provide you with the information you ask for unless it is not covered by the Act (that is, it is 'exempt'). If the information you want is exempt, we have to tell you why.

If you do not agree with us, you should follow stages one and two of the procedures set out in this document. If you are still not satisfied, you may ask the Information Commissioner to review our decision.

You can get copies of our publication scheme by visiting www.hlf.org.uk or phoning 020 7591 6044.

To contact the Information Commissioner's Office, see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this leaflet.

Your personal information

If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint. We may also give your personal information to other people and organisations if we have to do so by law or if you have given us permission.

Equal opportunities

We are committed to equal opportunities and take complaints about discrimination seriously.

We may use complaints about discrimination to review our policies and procedures. This is to make sure we treat everyone equally.

Comments and suggestions

We welcome comments and suggestions as these can help us improve our services. Please send any comments or suggestions to our customer information team. The contact details are given in 'Getting in touch' at the end of this leaflet.

Crystal
Mark
11859



Clarity approved by
Plain English Campaign

Getting in touch

Heritage Lottery Fund

Customer information team

7 Holbein Place
London SW1W 8NR
Phone: 020 7591 6044
Fax: 020 7591 6001
Textphone: 020 7591 6255
Email: enquire@hlf.org.uk

If you want to comment on any government policy on heritage, contact:

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH
Phone: 020 7211 6000
Email: enquiries@culture.gov.uk
Website: www.culture.gov.uk

For complaints to do with Welsh language services contact:

Welsh Language Commissioner

Market Chambers
5-7 St Mary Street
Cardiff CF10 1AT
Phone: 0845 6033 221
Email:
post@welshlanguagecommissioner.org

Other contacts

Office of the Independent Complaints Reviewer

c/o Lottery Forum, 7 Holbein Place
London SW1W 8NR
Phone: 020 7591 6038
Textphone: 020 7591 6255
Email: katie.roberts@lotteryforum.org.uk

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)

Millbank Tower, Millbank
London SW1P 4QP
Helpline: 0345 015 4033
Email:
phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

4 Melville Street
Edinburgh EH3 7NS
Freephone: 0800 377 7330
Online contact:
www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Website: www.spsso.org.uk
Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House, Water Lane
Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF
Phone: 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545 745
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk