

Worcestershire LEP

# Complaints Policy

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy lays down how the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) intend to deal with complaints; the general principle and the detailed procedure.

## 2 General Principles

- 2.1 WLEP encourages all feedback and intends to use it constructively.
- 2.2 The WLEP sees feedback as an integral part of service provision, and this policy as embodying our organisational values, specifically for seeking, accepting and acting on feedback.
- 2.3 The WLEP aims for the business community, public sector and general public to have a clear channel of feedback and complaint.
- 2.4 The WLEP is committed to deal with all complaints fairly and impartially.
- 2.5 The WLEP is committed to deal with all complaints confidentially.

## 3 Definition

- 3.1 Our definition of a complaint is as follows:

*An expression of dissatisfaction of the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership or our workforce, affecting an individual, group or organisation.*

- 3.2 The Complaints Procedure is not intended to cover:

- requests for service or information.
- requests for explanation of practise.
- informal matters which could be resolved speedily with an apology, to the satisfaction of the person raising them.
- matters over which the WLEP has no control.

## 4 Process

## 4.1 Channel for Complaints

- 4.1.1 The WLEP will only accept complaints electronically. This is to ensure that any complaint is dealt with in an efficient, cost-effective and environmentally-friendly manner.
- 4.1.2 The WLEP will provide a copy of this complaints policy on the WLEP website ([www.wlep.co.uk](http://www.wlep.co.uk)).

## 4.2 Compensation

- 4.2.1 The WLEP does not have a policy for compensation and each individual complaint will be treated on its merits. Where a complaint is deemed justified the WLEP will formally apologise and actively seek to discuss an appropriate solution and 'lessons-learned' with the complainant.

## 5 Stages of the Complaints Procedure

### 5.1 General

- 5.1.1 The WLEP allow for complaints to appeal and request further investigation if they are not satisfied with the treatment or solution offered in the initial contact and investigation. The route of escalation is:

**Stage 1** - Initial investigation and response by WLEP executive team

**Stage 2** - Referral to Worcester Local Enterprise Partnership Chairman

**Stage 3** - Referral to the WLEP Finance, Audit, Risk and Appointments Committee

- 5.1.2 We are committed to satisfy complaints as early in the process as possible.

### 5.2 Standards

- 5.2.1 For Stage 1 complaints, we will give a full response within 15 working days or, in case of an investigation taking longer than anticipated, we will keep the complainant updated of the time scale and reasons for delay.
- 5.2.2 For Stage 2 appeals, we will give a full response within 20 working days or, in case of an investigation taking longer than anticipated, we will keep the complainant updated of the time scale and reasons for delay

- 5.2.3 For Stage 3 appeals, we will give a full response within 28 working days or, in case of an investigation taking longer than anticipated, we will keep the complainant updated of the time scale and reasons for delay
- 5.2.4 Appeals against decisions of Stage 1 or 2 will only be accepted if received within 28 working days after the respective Stage 1 or 2 full response was received unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 5.2.5 Whenever a complaint or appeal is complex or complainant has difficulties in explaining their complaint, it may be helpful to make an initial contact to clarify details and confirm understanding with the WLEP executive team (via the following email address: [enquiries@wlep.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@wlep.co.uk)).
- 5.2.6 The appeals stages (i.e. Stage 2 or 3) are designed to review the process of the previous stage and the justification of the decision made. For this reason, no new evidence will be accepted during these stages and complainants will not be given a revised decision unless a procedure or outcome was found to be unjustified, missing or inappropriate.

### **5.3 Stage 1 - Initial Complaint**

- 5.3.1 Any initial complaint should be sent electronically to the WLEP executive team via the following email address: [enquiries@wlep.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@wlep.co.uk).
- 5.3.2 An initial acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within five working days of receiving the appeal, providing a confirmation that we are aware of the complaint and that it is being dealt with by the WLEP executive team.
- 5.3.3 A full Stage 1 complaint response will be sent within 15 working days of receiving complaint. This response should follow a general format:
- A statement from the WLEP apologising for the experience.
  - Stating what we understand the complaint to be.
  - Presenting what was found on investigation and any actions planned or undertaken.
  - A formal apology, where the complaint has been found justified.
  - Detailed instructions for the complainant to appeal if they are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1. Included within these instructions, will be the appropriate contact information for the WLEP Chairman for the Stage 2 appeals process.

### **5.4 Stage 2 - Referral to Chairman**

- 5.4.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the justification of the Stage 1 decision, or the procedure followed in Stage 1 and wish to appeal, they should contact the WLEP Chairman via contact information provided within the full response at Stage 1. When

contacting the WLEP Chairman they should explain their reason for dissatisfaction and request to proceed to Stage 2 of the procedure.

5.4.2 The Stage 2 appeal will be evaluated by the WLEP Chairman, who will investigate the outcome of Stage 1 and determine whether the decision was justified and the procedure was correctly followed. The appeals process does not aim to present a second, independent, inquiry into their complaint, but a review of whether the initial procedure was not correctly completed.

5.4.3 The Chairman will:

- Examine the information provided in Stage 1.
- Investigate the decision of Stage 1.
- Determine whether the decision is justified and the process was followed correctly.
- Inform the full response for complaints at Stage 2.
- Identify the faults in the complaints process or outcome that led to the complainants dissatisfaction and recommend changes that would prevent these problems in the future.

5.4.4 An initial acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within five working days of receiving the Stage 1 appeal request, providing a confirmation that we are aware of the appeal and that it is being dealt with by the WLEP Chairman.

5.4.5 A full Stage 2 appeal response will be sent within 20 working days of receiving the Stage 1 appeal request. This response should follow a general format:

- Starting with a statement from the WLEP apologising for the experience.
- Stating what we understand the complaint to be.
- Presenting what was found on investigation and a description on the planned actions for future improvement in WLEP working and complaints procedure.
- A formal apology, where the complaint has been found justified.
- Detailed instructions for the complainant to appeal if they are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2. Included within these instructions, will be the appropriate contact information for the WLEP Chairman for the Stage 3 appeals process.

## **5.5 Stage 3 - Finance, Audit, Risk and Appointments Committee**

5.5.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the justification of the Stage 2 decision, or the procedure followed in Stage 2 and wish to appeal, they should contact the WLEP Chairman via contact information provided within the full response at Stage 2. When contacting the WLEP Chairman they should explain their reason for dissatisfaction and request to proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure.

- 5.5.2. This appeal will be evaluated with by the Worcestershire Finance, Audit, Risk and Appointments Committee, who will investigate the outcome of Stage 2 to determine whether the response was justified and the procedure was followed correctly. As with the Stage 2 appeals process, this appeal does not aim to present an independent inquiry into their complaint, but aims to reflect whether the complaints procedure was not correctly completed.
- 5.5.3 An initial acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within five working days of receiving the appeal request for Stage 2, providing a confirmation that we are aware of the appeal and that it is being dealt with by the WLEP Finance, Audit, Risk and Appointments Committee.
- 5.5.4 A full Stage 3 appeal response will be sent within 28 days of receiving appeal request for Stage 2.