



MazeLongKesh
from peace to prosperity

MAZE LONG KESH

Development Corporation

Complaints Policy

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| <i>Document (CM) Reference</i> | <i>F11/22/122797</i> |
| <i>Document Owner</i> | <i>Director of Finance & CS</i> |
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| <i>Version</i> | <i>1.0</i> |
| <i>Approval</i> | <i>03/02/2022</i> |
| <i>Date Issued</i> | <i>16/02/2022</i> |



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1. BACKGROUND

The Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation (MLKDC) seeks a positive public perception of its aims and activities. It is open and responsive to suggestions about and criticism of the ways it conducts its business. To this end, any complaint received will be treated:

- Courteously, promptly and effectively;
- On a confidential basis; and
- In accordance with the procedures set out below.

2. DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction:

- By any person or body external to MLKDC, excluding public sector organisations.
- With or against any action by or on behalf of MLKDC.

Complaints will be accepted in writing, by email, or verbally, whether face to face or by telephone by any member of the MLKDC staff who will pass the complaint to the Director of Finance & Corporate Services for investigation.

Where the complaint also involves other Maze Long Kesh site occupants, MLKDC will co-ordinate its responses with these occupants.

3. INTERPRETATIONS

Legal action, initiated against MLKDC, while clearly a complaint in the normal sense of the term, is quite distinct in procedural terms and does not come within the scope of this document. Similarly, staff grievance and disciplinary procedures are also distinct forms of complaint, dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in the MLKDC Staff Handbook.

A complaint against MLKDC may involve a third party, for example, a contractor employed by MLKDC and redress may be outside MLKDC's control but it will still be processed in line with these procedures.

Many verbal and some written expressions of dissatisfaction can be resolved easily and simply in discussion with the complainant. If MLKDC has been at fault, for example; a routine request for information has been overlooked or has not been dealt with quickly enough, an apology will be given.

4. COMPLAINTS –STAGE 1

A complaint will not affect the complainant's continuing right to fair and equitable treatment by the MLKDC.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services will respond to all complaints. The complaint will be acknowledged at once and an intended response date given. Where the complaint has been made verbally, the acknowledgement will also set out the MLKDC's understanding of the grounds of dissatisfaction, to allow the complainant an opportunity to clarify any misunderstanding. A copy of the MLKDC's complaints procedure will be enclosed with each acknowledgement and the Director of Finance & Corporate Services will offer to assist the complainant.

Responsibility for investigating a complaint rests with the Director of Finance & Corporate Services, though elements of the process can be delegated. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible, normally within five working days (including the day of receipt). Where this cannot be achieved, the Director of Finance & Corporate Services will initially acknowledge the complaint and thereafter issue holding replies at intervals of not more than ten working days, giving any revised date for the intended response.

Substantive replies will:

- Give a full explanation of the outcome of MLKDC's investigations;
- Give an apology where MLKDC has made a mistake: and
- Indicate what has been done to put matters right.

The replies will indicate that, where there is continuing dissatisfaction, the complainant may contact the Chief Executive.

5. COMPLAINTS – STAGE 2

If a further complaint is made, whether or not directly to the Chief Executive, it will be regarded as a '**5. COMPLAINTS – STAGE 2**' complaint. Where a substantive response cannot be given within five working days for example, if further investigations are deemed to be necessary, acknowledgement and a holding reply will be issued within the same timescales as set out in section '**4. COMPLAINTS –STAGE 1**'.

6. NORTHERN IRELAND PUBLIC SECTOR OMBUDSMAN

MLKDC's complaints procedure is not a substitute for anyone's right to complain to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman. It should be noted however, that the Ombudsman will generally expect the complainant to have exhausted MLKDC's complaints procedure before accepting a complaint. The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman can be contacted:

By Telephone: 028 9023 3821 (or Freephone 0800 343424)

In Writing: The Ombudsman,
Freepost BEL 1478,
Belfast,
BT1 6BR

By Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

In Person at: The Ombudsman's Office,
Progressive House,
33-37 Wellington Place,
Belfast,
BT1 6HN.

You can also visit the Ombudsman's Office website at: <https://nipso.org.uk>