

Belfast Harbour Commissioners
Complaints Procedure

Belfast Harbour Commissioners (“**BHC**”) seeks a positive public perception of the organisation’s aims and activities. BHC is open and responsive to suggested improvements to, as well as criticisms of, the way it conducts business and especially in terms of equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations.

The purpose of this procedure is therefore to provide persons and entities who have dealings with BHC with redress for administrative failures by BHC. For a complaint to be upheld, it must be shown that there has been such a failure on the part of BHC.

Any complaint as to any action or inaction on the part of BHC or its employees, servants and agents will be treated courteously, promptly and effectively and in accordance with this procedure.

Complaints will be received by telephone, post, fax or e-mail, addressed to:

Complaints Officer
Belfast Harbour Commissioners
Harbour Office
Corporation Square
Belfast BT1 3AL

Telephone: 028 9055 4422
Fax: 028 9055 4411
E-mail: complaintsofficer@belfast-harbour.co.uk

Whilst a complaint may initially be made by telephone, BHC may require confirmation of the complaint in writing.

If the complaint is made on behalf of another person, it should be accompanied by a letter of authorisation or power of attorney.

All complaints received will be investigated thoroughly and responded to by BHC.

All complaints received will be dealt with by a complaints officer (“**Complaints Officer**”) (who is independent from the subject matter of the complaint and will normally be nominated by the Chief Executive). It should be noted that a complaint will not normally be investigated by the Chief Executive.

It is the role of the Chief Executive to decide whether or not any complaint received is sufficiently serious to merit notification to the BHC Board or relevant Board Committee.

A complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days. A complaint will be investigated by the Complaints Officer and a response issued in writing usually within a timescale that will be determined by the nature of the complaint. This will not normally be longer than 2 months.

If any complaint finding is that there has been an administrative failure and therefore justifies remedial action, such action will be proportionate to the nature of the complaint upheld, and may include one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- a correction of an error;
- undertaking service improvement; or
- a change in policy or procedure.

Records of complaints received by BHC will be retained by BHC for a minimum of 1 year after this procedure has been exhausted.

This procedure will not normally apply to any dispute, disagreement or complaint arising in respect of a commercial agreement or commercial relationship between BHC and any third party, particularly where there is any form of dispute resolution procedure documented between the parties. Such issues should be dealt via such dispute resolution procedures, or alternatively by seeking commercial resolution within the context of such commercial agreement or relationship.

This procedure does not affect the right of the complainant to pursue his/her complaint with the Equality Commission in accordance with paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Any complainant who is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint handled in accordance with this procedure may ask for an internal review by BHC by contacting:

The Chief Executive
Belfast Harbour Commissioners
Corporation Square
Belfast
BT1 3AL

The Chief Executive will normally appoint another official to review the complaint and respond to the complaint within a reasonable timescale.

The final BHC response post review will advise the complainant that if they remain unhappy with the outcome of a complaint handled in accordance with this procedure, they may contact the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman at:

NI Public Service Ombudsman
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Telephone: 0800 34 34 24
Email: Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Any changes to this procedure will be posted on the BHC website.