

This Policy has been approved by the Board of Directors.

Any amendments to this policy or related forms (if applicable) can be submitted by any Board Member, member of staff or volunteer. These should be submitted to the Manager or the Board of Directors for approval.

Policies are amended and updated in line with Health and Safety, financial, legal and fiduciary requirements and operational and strategic changes. Where appropriate, External experts may be consulted.

This policy is on our website <https://www.locallinklmf.ie/contact-us-2/>

4.5.16 Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Flexibus seek to offer a high-quality service to all users. We understand that there will be times when people who use our services wish to make suggestions to help us to improve these services, or to complain about the service they have received or feel they should be receiving.

We wish to ensure that everyone who uses our services is aware that they have the right to raise concerns or make complaints.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure, which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at Meath Accessible Transport Project CLG- Flexibus knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and those relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of our service

Who Can Complain?

- Any person using or wishing to use one of our services.
- A person who legitimately represents someone who uses, or wishes to use, one of our services.
- A person / organisation that interacts with our staff, services, vehicle or premises.

What Can Be Complained About?

- The Complaints Procedure can be used to raise any concerns about any aspect of the company.

Can I Get Help in Making My Complaint Known?

The person dealing with your complaint will try to assist you in whichever way is appropriate e.g.:

- Written Complaint: in putting your complaint in writing. This can be accepted through email, Facebook messenger, Instagram direct messages and through the office mobile phone.
- Verbal Complaint in person: If you wish to make a complaint verbally in person, you can come into our office in Navan and you are more than welcome to bring someone along, either for support or to act on your behalf.
- Verbal Complaint by phone: If you wish to make a complaint by phone, the person can phone 046 9074830 or 1800 303 707.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and follow any relevant data protection requirements.

To Whom Do I Make My Complaint?

- In the first instance you should normally make a complaint, verbally or in writing, directly to the member of staff providing the relevant service. Or you may, if you prefer, make a complaint, in writing, to the Manager or the Chairperson of the Board. However, in the

latter case, the Chairperson of the Board would normally refer the matter to the Manager, unless your complaint refers directly to the Manager.

The staff member to contact:

The Manager.

Office Hours is Monday to Friday 7am to 5.30pm.

Contact number is 046 9074830 or 1800 303 707

Email is: lmf@locallink.ie

Complaints Procedure of Meath Accessible Transport Project CLG - Flexibus

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

All Complaints received need to be recorded. The person who receives a phone complaint or an in-person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, email address and telephone number – if they are happy to share this information with you.
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Flexibus For example Passenger, driving behind vehicle etc
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next. Depending on the gravity of the complaint, the complaint may be dealt with straight away, or the staff member may need to escalate the complaint to Management. • If the complainant feels that something has happened that contravenes the law, they should also report the incident to the Gardaí.
- Where a person makes a complaint and wishes to access the CCTV from the Vehicle, this must be requested by the complainant to the owners of the bus company. If this

is not known, the main phone number of the company will be given to the complainant.

Resolving Complaints

Stage One In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be logged and passed to the Manager that day by email.

On receiving the complaint, the Manager, or person assigned by the Manager records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond this should be dealt with by the Manager.

Complaints should be acknowledged to the complainant. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and that it is being dealt with as timely and as sensitively as required. If the person wants to know what the policy is, they can be directed to our website. Where someone has no access to the internet, then a printed copy can be sent out to the person if requested.

Complainants should receive a definitive reply within a timely manner. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within 3 working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply. While all complaints are taken seriously, it is important to remember that the Chairperson of the Board is a volunteer and not based in the building on a full-time basis.

The Chairperson may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure:

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Appendix 1

Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
 - Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
 - If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told Remain professional at all times.

Meath Accessible Transport Project CLG Policies and Procedures

Title: 4.5.16 Complaints Policy and Procedure

Issue No: 5

Policy created and 1st approval date: October 2014

Date	Version	Approval	Reasons and section for amendments
AGM 2017	Issue 2	AGM	Change of approval process and change of format to include amendments sections.
AGM 2019	Issue 3	AGM	Updated
AGM 2022	Issue 4	AMG	Reviewed and updated
AGM 2025	Issue 5	AGM	Reviewed and updated

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