



COMPAINTS HANDLING AND DELIVERY OF SERVICE PROCEDURES

JULY 2024

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Our Complaint Handling Procedure reflects Lothian Pension Fund's commitment to its members and that we manage all complaints properly. We've put in place procedures to resolve any complaint and carry out impartial and fair investigations so we can make evidence-based decisions on the facts of the case if appropriate.

We learn from complaints. It gives us valuable information to help improve our service and customer satisfaction. Our Complaint Handling Procedures enable us to address a member's dissatisfaction and may prevent similar from happening again.



For our staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of the members' views and experience and can highlight things we may otherwise miss. It helps us to continuously improve our services.

DEADLINES FOR MAKING COMPLAINTS

Members or their representatives must raise their complaint within six months of first being aware of the problem. There are special circumstances for considering complaints beyond this time, for example, unable to because of serious illness or recent bereavement).

Stage 1

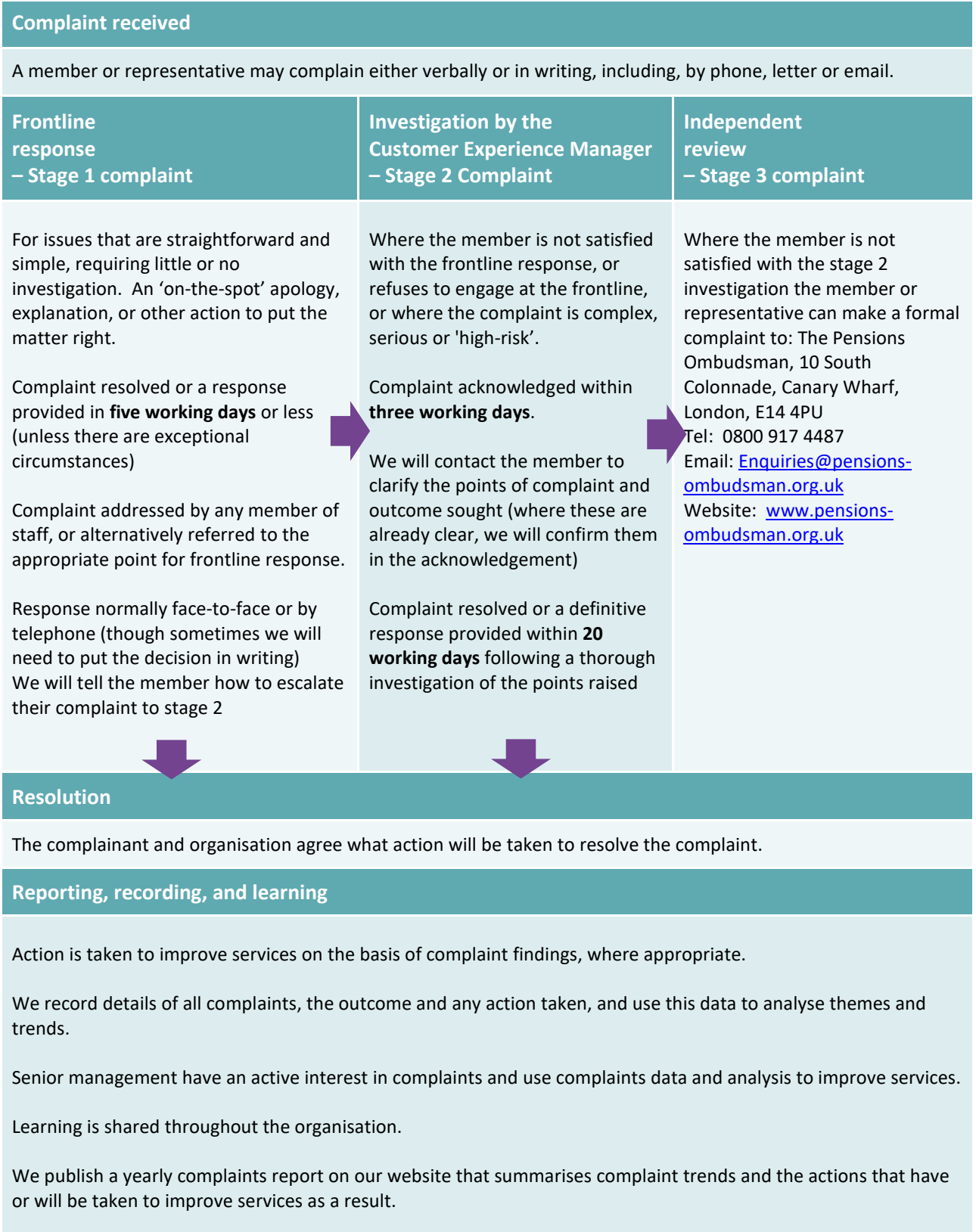
If a member or their representative has received a stage 1 response, and wishes to escalate to stage 2, unless special circumstances, they must request this either:

- within six months of when they first knew of the problem; or
- within two months of receiving their stage 1 response (if this is later).

We will apply these time limits with discretion, taking into account the seriousness of the issue, the availability of relevant records and staff involved, how long ago the events occurred, and the likelihood that an investigation will lead to a practical benefit for the member or useful learning for the organisation.



How the Lothian Pension Fund complaints handling procedure works



EXTENSION TO THE TIMELINE

We make every effort to meet the deadlines above. If we think it will not be possible to meet the 20-day timeframe for an investigation, we will contact the member or their representative, give the reason why and provide a revised timescale for completion.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS

We expect all Lothian Pension Fund staff to behave in a professional manner and treat our members with courtesy, respect, and dignity. We also ask members or their representatives bringing a complaint to treat our staff with the same respect.

Members whose behaviour is repeatedly challenging or inappropriate, may still have a legitimate grievance, and we will treat all complaints seriously. However, we also recognise that the actions of some members may result in unreasonable demands on time and resources or unacceptable behaviour towards our staff. We will, protect staff from unacceptable actions such as unreasonable persistence, threats or offensive behaviour from customers.



If the decision is made to restrict a member's contact (for example, limiting communication to letter or to a named staff member) we will normally continue investigating a complaint. In some cases, it may be possible to continue investigating the complaint without contact from the member.

WHAT IS NOT COVERED BY OUR COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY?

Pension rules disputes are applied under the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations (LGPS). It allows members or their representative to raise a complaint arising from the running of the scheme.

The Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure is a two-stage process.

Stage 1

A member or their representative must complete an [IDRP form](#) and return it to Lothian Pension Fund within six months of the day when they were told of the decision, they want to make a complain about. Lothian Pension Fund will pass it on to the Stage 1 appointed person on their behalf. A written decision will normally be issued within two months of receipt of the complaint.

Stage 2

If a member or their representative is dissatisfied with the decision at Stage 1, they should write within six months of the decision to the Scottish Ministers. A written decision will normally be issued within two months of the complaint. If they are dissatisfied with the decision of the Scottish Ministers, the member or their representative can refer their complaint to:

The Pensions Ombudsman

10 South Colonnade, Canary Wharf, London, E14 4PU

Tel: 0800 917 4487

Email: Enquiries@pensions-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk

Confidentiality is important in complaints handling. [The Lothian Pension Fund Privacy Policy](#) sets out how we manage customer data.