

Screen South Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Making a complaint

Introduction

If you want to make a complaint, we have a procedure for you to follow and this page explains how it works. Making a complaint will not affect in any way the level of service you receive from us. For example, if your complaint relates to a funding application your chances of getting a grant from us will not be compromised.

What can I complain about?

You can complain if you think that:

- 'maladministration' has taken place (for example, if we have delayed, made mistakes in or failed to follow the procedures in our application process);
- we have failed to give you access to information or have given you incorrect advice or information;
- we have not treated you politely; or
- we have discriminated against you or not treated you fairly.

If your complaint concerns a LOTTERY funding application, we can only look at your application for funding again if:

- we discover (through dealing with a complaint) that we did not follow the published procedures for assessing your application;
- you can show that we have misunderstood a significant part of your application; or
- you can show that we did not take notice of relevant information.

You may not be sure what information you should include or how best to set out your complaint. You should set out the facts as clearly as possible, in a logical order. Remember to include important details and dates where possible.

Any complaints should be made within 1 month of the original application decision or any incident involving a member of staff.

We will keep all complaints confidential. If you make a complaint, we will treat you with respect, and we expect you to treat our staff in the same way.

What you cannot complain about

You may be disappointed if we turn down your application for funding, but you cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against our decision on giving a grant if we have followed our decision-making process correctly.

If you have any comments about our policies, send these to:

Chief Executive Officer
Screen South
The Wedge
75 – 81 Tontine Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1JR

Do not use this complaints procedure to make a complaint about any fraud you think has taken place. You should report this to the Chief Executive Officer, Screen South, The Wedge 75 – 81 Tontine Street, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1JR.

How do I make a complaint?

Stage One

If you are not happy with the service you have received, contact the person you first dealt with. They will try to put things right. We hope that we can settle complaints as quickly as possible in this way.

Stage Two

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you can take this further by writing to (or sending an audio tape or CD) to the
Chief Executive Officer
Screen South
The Wedge
75 – 81 Tontine Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1JR

Please tell us all of the following information:

- what happened;
- when it happened;
- who dealt with you;
- what you would like us to do to put things right.
- also tell us if there is anything we need to know about how to contact you (for example, if you would like us to reply by textphone or on audio tape).

You must do this within four weeks of receiving our response to stage one.

When will I hear from you?

Within 5 working days of receiving your complaint we will write to or phone you to say that we have received it. We will also tell you how you can contact the person who is dealing with your complaint and when you can expect a reply.

In most cases, you will receive a full reply to your complaint within 10 working days. If we cannot give a full reply in this time, we will tell you why and when you are likely to receive it.

If your complaint is about the way we have used our powers to refuse or manage funding, you can move to stage three. If your complaint is about the way we conduct any other aspect our business, we will let you know of possible alternatives that may be open to you. We will tell you in our response to stage two whether stage three is open to you.

Stage three

If you are not satisfied with the Chief Executive's reply, you can refer your complaint to the Independent Complaints Reviewer (ICR).

The ICR is unbiased and hears both sides of the complaint.

The ICR is not part of our organisation and their investigations and recommendations are independent. You can ask the ICR to look at your complaint and there is no charge for using the ICR.

The Office of the ICR will contact you within five working days of receipt of your complaint.

The ICR has the power to decide whether or not to investigate a complaint, and he or she will explain their reasons if they decide not to investigate it.

If the ICR investigates your complaint and finds that it is justified, he or she will recommend ways for us to put things right, and how to prevent a similar situation in future. The ICR will report within three months, and usually more quickly, we will normally make any changes the ICR recommends to our procedures as quickly as possible.

The ICR cannot consider complaints that have not gone through the procedure set out in this document. If you want the ICR to consider your complaint, you must write to them, or send them an audio tape or CD, within four weeks of receiving our Chief Executive's reply.

The ICR cannot reverse funding decisions or make comments or changes to our legal responsibilities and policies on awarding grants.

To contact the ICR see 'Getting in touch' below.

Other ways to make a complaint

The Parliamentary Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (known as the Parliamentary Ombudsman) investigates complaints by members of the public who have suffered injustice because of maladministration by public organisations.

By law, the Ombudsman is independent of the Government and the civil service, and has wide powers to investigate.

The Ombudsman does not normally investigate complaints if they have not been through our complaints procedures first.

The Ombudsman's services are free.

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman – see 'Getting in touch' below.

Judicial review

A judicial review is where a judge examines your complaint to see whether we have behaved illegally. The judge cannot rule that we must change a funding decision, but he or she can ask us to reconsider our decision.

Freedom of information

If you want information from us that is not available on our website, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you the right to ask us for it. Under the Act, we must provide you with the information you ask for unless it is not covered by an exemption within the Act. If the information you want is exempt, we have to tell you why.

If you do not agree with us, you should follow stages one and two of the procedures set out in this document. If you are still not satisfied, you may ask the Information Commissioner to review our decision.

To contact the Information Commissioner, see 'Getting in touch' below.

Your personal information

If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint. We may also give your personal information to other people and organisations if we have to do so by law or if you have given us permission.

Equal opportunities

We are committed to equal opportunities and take complaints about discrimination seriously.

We may use complaints about discrimination to review our policies and procedures. This is to make sure we treat everyone fairly.

We may record information about the ethnic background, sex and disability of everyone who makes a complaint so that we promote and maintain our equal opportunities commitment. We will keep all information confidential.

Getting in touch

Screen South
The Wedge
75 – 81 Tontine Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1JR

Tel 01303 259777
Fax 01303 259786
E mail info@screensouth.org

Other contacts

Independent Complaints Reviewer
c/o Lottery Forum
PO Box 52727
London
EC4P 4WN

Tel 020 7211 3823
Textphone 0845 039 0204

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman from:

Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP

Helpline 0845 015 4033
Phone 020 7217 4163
Fax 020 7217 4000
Textphone 020 7217 4066
E mail opca.enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.uk

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel 01625 545 700
Fax 01625 524 510
E mail mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk