

BEDFORD GROUP OF DRAINAGE BOARDS

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

GOVERNANCE

Review date: April 2022

To be reviewed every 5 years

Next review date: April 2027

Reviewed by: Joint Management Committee

Adopted by:

**Alconbury & Ellington Internal Drainage Board
Bedfordshire & River Ivel Internal Drainage Board
Buckingham & River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board**

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. NEED TO COMPLAIN?

- (a) The Boards in the Bedford Group have a procedure for dealing with complaints from members of the public and others. Despite our best endeavours, we recognise that things may not always meet your expectations. We follow a standard procedure to ensure that we investigate your complaint fully and fairly, and which enables complaints to be dealt with in a consistent way.
- (b) We want to hear from you if you are unhappy with our services and want to make a complaint.

2. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

- (a) A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, action or lack of action made by the Board or its staff, contractors etc., affecting an individual member of the public or other group or organisation.

3. STEPS TO FOLLOW

- (a) Some complaints can be dealt with immediately, and we would like to put things right straight away if possible, rather than involve you in filling out a form and waiting for a response. So, if you are not happy with the way we have dealt with your complaint, your first step is to go back to the person in the Board who handled the matter in the first place.
- (b) If you are still not satisfied with the way your complaint has been dealt with, then we will adopt a formal procedure in order to investigate it further. Please fill in the [complaints form](#), setting out what went wrong and what you think the Board should do to put things right. Please provide as much information about your complaint as possible and include reference numbers, dates of correspondence etc. Your personal information in the form will only be used to respond to your complaint and will be held in accordance with GDPR 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018. Specifically, personal information is never shared with any third party organisation and is managed in accordance with the Board's Data Protection Policy.
- (c) We will acknowledge your complaint in writing or by phone to confirm that we have understood your concerns correctly. We will tell you who is dealing with the complaint and how they can be contacted. The person investigating your complaint will always be a senior officer of the Board.
- (d) We will investigate your complaint, and where possible, send a written reply to you within 15 working days of our acknowledgement (which we will send you within seven working days). If the matter requires further investigation, we will tell you the reason for the delay and when a full reply will be sent.
- (e) If you are not satisfied with our reply, please let us know why. If possible, we will investigate further and, where necessary, a committee of Board members will review your concerns.

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Some issues will take longer to review than others, however we will keep you informed of progress and provide a further reply within 15 working days of receiving your written request for your complaint to be reviewed. The review by Board members is the final stage of the Board's internal complaints procedure.

- (f) ~~If you feel that we have failed to secure the efficient working and maintenance of our drainage system, you can also request the Environment Agency to exercise its supervisory powers and review your complaint. If the Environment Agency considers it to be appropriate, they may give us such general or special directions, which we will consider. If we fail to act on such directions, you can ask the Environment Agency to exercise its powers to carry out works on our behalf, where in their opinion land is injured or is likely to be injured by flooding or inadequate drainage as a direct result of us not exercising our powers, in whole or in part.~~

4. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN

- (a) If you remain dissatisfied with the way we have dealt with your complaint you may refer it to the [Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman \(LGO\)](#), who look at individual complaints about organisations providing local public services. The LGO works independently to the Bedford Group and its Member Boards, investigating allegations of maladministration causing injustice to the person who has complained. However, the Ombudsman will usually expect you to have tried to get your complaint settled by the Board first. Any complaint to the Ombudsman must involve more than a disagreement with the Board and needs to show that something went wrong and an injustice was caused. For example, it might be maladministration if the Board:

- made a mistake
- took too long to do something;
- did not follow its own rules or the law;
- broke its promises;
- gave you wrong information; or
- did not make a decision in the right way – that is, if it:
 - did not follow the right procedures when making the decision;
 - did not consider all the relevant information; or
 - wrongly considered irrelevant information.

- (b) You might have been caused an injustice by the Board's maladministration if, for example, you:

- did not get the service or benefit you were entitled to or there was a delay before you got it;
- suffered financial loss; or
- were put to a lot of avoidable expense, trouble or inconvenience, or suffered avoidable uncertainty or stress.

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- (c) The Local Government Ombudsman might not investigate your complaint if they consider that the injustice is only slight, or if the Board has already taken, or is willing to take, satisfactory action to resolve it.
- (d) The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has a leaflet called “How to Complain about a Council”. While the leaflet refers to councils, the same principles apply equally to IDBs. You can get a copy of these leaflets by telephoning 0300 061 0614, or downloading them from their website at www.lgo.org.uk.
- (e) You may contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman by telephoning 0300 061 0614 or visiting their website on <https://www.lgo.org.uk/contact-us> and using their on-line complaints form.

5. WHY WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU?

- (a) Although we want to hear from you if you feel you need to complain, we like to hear any comments you have about our overall service performance. We want to provide the best possible service and your comments will help us to know what we are doing well, and also what we need to improve on.

6. IF YOU WISH TO COMPLAIN

- (a) You can email the [Complaint Form](#) from our website or print and submit it to the office:

Bedford Group of Drainage Boards
Vale House
Broadmead Road
Stewartby
Bedford
MK43 9ND

Alternatively, you can complete the Complaint Form online and send it to us by email.

7. DATA PROTECTION COMPLAINTS

- (a) If you wish to complain about how we have handled your personal data or dealt with your information rights then please direct your complaint to Alice Smith, Data Protection Officer, Bedford Group of Drainage Boards, Vale House, Broadmead Road, Stewartby, Bedfordshire MK43 9ND

Tel: 01234 767995
Email: alice.smith@idbs.org.uk

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- (b) You will receive a written response within twenty working days. If you remain dissatisfied with the Board's reply you can escalate the complaint to the Board's Senior Information Risk Officer, Phil Camamile, Bedford Group of Drainage Boards, Vale House, Broadmead Road, Stewartby, Bedfordshire, MK43 9ND

Tel: 01234 767995

Email: phil.camamile@idbs.org.uk

- (c) If after further correspondence you remain dissatisfied with the Board's reply you may contact the Information Commissioner (at the address below) who will independently adjudicate each case and make a final decision:

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

Tel: 01625 545700

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDUREVersion Control

Version	Changes made	Date
Version 1	n/a	??

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