

# FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

## CORPORATE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



**The Secretariat**  
**Stanley**

### **Procedure Dates**

Procedure supported by ExCo: 60/16 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016

Procedure extant from: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016

Procedure review date: March 2018 for July 2018 publication

Responsible officer for review: Director of Central Services

# **Falkland Islands Government Corporate Complaints Procedure**

## **Foreword**

Our corporate complaints policy reflects Falkland Islands Government commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints so that, where appropriate, we can make evidence-based decisions on the facts of the case.

Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve customer satisfaction. Our complaints handling procedure will enable us to address a customer's dissatisfaction and may also prevent the same problems that led to the complaint from happening again. For our staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of the customer's views and experience, and can highlight problems we may otherwise miss. Handled well, complaints can give our customers a form of redress when things go wrong, and can also help us continuously improve our services.

Resolving complaints early saves money and creates better customer relations. Sorting them out as close to the point of service delivery as possible means we can deal with them locally and quickly, so they are less likely to escalate to the next stage of the procedure. Complaints that we do not resolve swiftly can greatly add to our workload.

The complaints handling procedure will help us do our job better, improve relationships with our customers and enhance public perception of the Falkland Islands Government. It will help us keep the user at the heart of the process, while enabling us to better understand how to improve our services by learning from complaints.

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# What is a complaint?

Falkland Islands Government definition of a complaint is:

'An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about FIG's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Falkland Islands Government.'

A complaint may relate to:

- failure to provide a service
- inadequate standard of service
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- disagreement with a decision where the customer cannot use another procedure (for example an appeal) to resolve the matter
- Falkland Islands Government's failure to follow the appropriate administrative process
- non-compliance with legislation or approved government policy.

This list does not cover everything.

A complaint is **not**:

- a routine first-time request for a service
- a request for compensation only
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- disagreement with a decision where a statutory right of appeal exists, for example in relation to taxation or planning
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision
- dissatisfaction with Government policy.

You must not treat these issues as complaints, and should instead direct customers to use the appropriate procedures.

## Handling anonymous complaints

We value all complaints. This means we treat all complaints including anonymous complaints seriously and will take action to consider them further, wherever this is appropriate. Generally, we will consider anonymous complaints if there is enough information in the complaint to enable us to make further enquiries. If, however, an anonymous complaint does not provide enough information to enable us to take further

action, we may decide not to pursue it further. Any decision not to pursue an anonymous complaint must be authorised by a Director.

If an anonymous complaint makes serious allegations, we will refer it to a senior officer immediately.

If we pursue an anonymous complaint further, we will record the issues as an anonymous complaint on the complaints system. This will help to ensure the completeness of the complaints data we record and allow us to take corrective action where appropriate.

### **What if the customer does not want to complain?**

If a customer has expressed dissatisfaction in line with our definition of a complaint but does not want to complain, tell them that we do consider all expressions of dissatisfaction, and that complaints offer us the opportunity to improve services where things have gone wrong. Encourage the customer to submit their complaint and allow us to deal with it through the complaints handling procedure. This will ensure that the customer is updated on the action taken and gets a response to their complaint.

If, however, the customer insists they do not wish to complain, record the issue as an anonymous complaint. This will ensure that the customer's details are not recorded on the departmental complaints register and that they receive no further contact about the matter. It will also help to ensure the completeness of the complaints data recorded and will still allow us to fully consider the matter and take corrective action where appropriate. This information should be treated as customer feedback as suggested under 'proactive customer facing departments'.

### **Who can make a complaint?**

Anyone who receives, requests or is affected by our services can make a complaint. Sometimes a customer may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint on their own. We will accept complaints brought by third parties as long as the customer has given their personal consent.

### **Complaints involving more than one service or organisation**

If a complaint relates to the actions of two or more Falkland Islands Government services, you must agree between the service which will take the lead in dealing with the complaint and then tell the customer, and explain that they will get only one response covering all issues raised.

### **Complaints raised through elected Members in a constituency role**

Individuals with a complaint to make are encouraged to raise their complaint through the corporate complaints procedure. However, if the Civil Service receive a complaint through

an elected MLA a response will be sent to the MLA submitting the complaint within ten working days.

**Complaints covered by other policies and procedures**

Some departments have formal complaints procedures which apply instead of this policy. Complaints against the Royal Falkland Islands Police, members of the judiciary, His Excellency the Governor or Members of the Legislative Assembly should be directed to the appropriate body to deal with the complaint rather than this policy.

Royal Falkland Islands Police (RFIP)	Police Ordinance	Chief Police Officer or when complaint relates to inspector or above, HE the Governor
HE the Governor		Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Members of the Judiciary		Chief Justice
Members of the Legislative Assembly	Standing Order 26.	Speaker

**Proactive Customer facing departments**

Departments who interact directly with customers should consider options for proactively encouraging customers to comment and provide feedback and improvement suggestions. Departments may wish to consider customer feedback boxes and forms, or customer satisfaction surveys. Any information collected should be reviewed regularly and improvements considered and fed back to customers.

**Vexatious complaints**

All complaints will be processed in accordance with this policy. However, during this process, staff may have contact with unreasonable behaviour from individuals complaining or unreasonably persistent individuals. FIG will not tolerate deceitful, abusive, offensive, threatening or other forms of unacceptable behaviour from individuals making complaints. When it occurs, we will take proportionate action to protect the wellbeing of our staff and the integrity of our processes.

FIG considers unreasonably persistent complaints to be those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contact with FIG, hinder FIG’s consideration of their or other people’s, complaints or impact on FIG’s ability to provide a service.

Our staff who investigate complaints also need to continue providing FIG services and ensure their time and resources is used to best effect. They cannot do so if someone tries to dominate our attention with frequent, lengthy contacts and repetitive information. This hinders the consideration of their, or other people’s, complaints and the provision of FIG

services. When necessary, we will take action to restrict an individual's ability to submit further complaints on a matter when unreasonable behaviour of this nature persists.

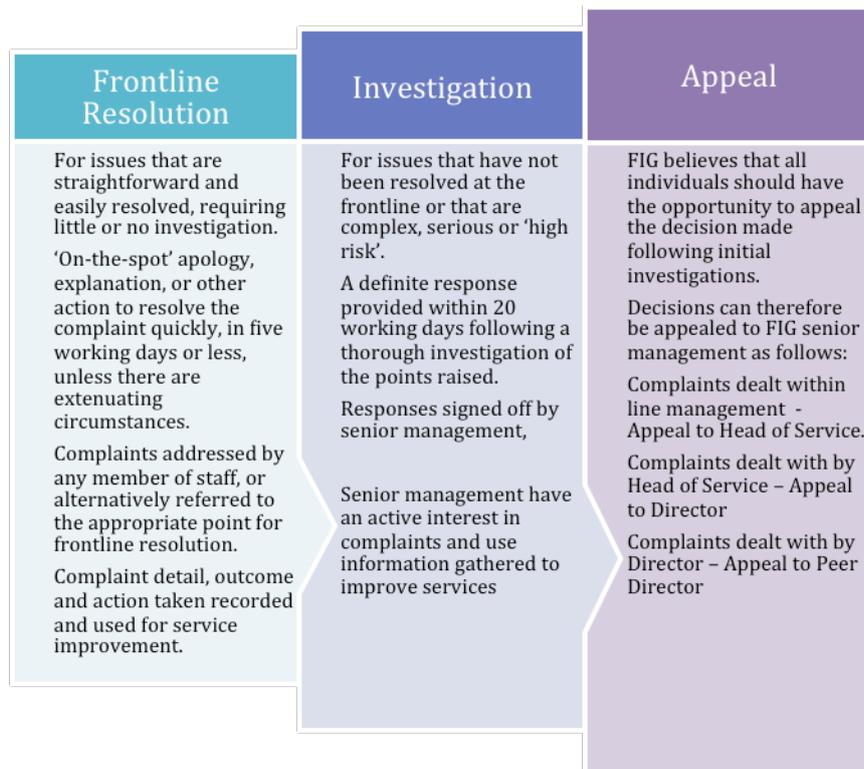
Should an investigator believe that an individual has become abusive, persistent or vexatious they should raise this matter to their Head of Service. The Head of Service shall assess the matter and make a formal recommendation to their director. A complaint can only be categorised as vexatious by a Director and in doing so the Director must consult with, and obtain agreement from, a Peer Director. At this point all contact relating to the matter (except for the provision of essential or statutory services) will cease along with any investigation into their complaint for a period of time determined by the two Directors. Heads of Service and Directors should take into account the guidance on categorising complaints as vexatious.

## The complaints handling process

Our complaints handling procedure aims to provide a quick, simple and streamlined process for resolving complaints early and locally by capable, well-trained staff.

Our complaints process provides three opportunities to resolve complaints internally:

- **frontline resolution,**
- **investigation,**
- **appeal.**



For clarity, the term 'frontline resolution' refers to the first stage of the complaints process. It does not reflect any job description within FIG but means seeking to resolve complaints at the initial point of contact where possible.

## **Stage one: frontline resolution**

Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straightforward customer complaints that require little or no investigation. Any member of staff may deal with complaints at this stage.

The main principle is to seek early resolution, resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity and as close to the point of service delivery as possible. This may mean a face-to-face discussion with the customer, or asking an appropriate member of staff to deal directly with the complaint.

In practice, frontline resolution means resolving the complaint at the first point of contact with the customer, either by the member of staff receiving the complaint or other identified staff.

In either case, you may settle the complaint by providing an on-the-spot apology where appropriate, or explaining why the issue occurred and, where possible, what will be done to stop this happening again. You may also explain that, as an organisation that values complaints, we may use the information given when we review service standards in the future.

A customer can make a complaint in writing, in person, by telephone, by email, or by having someone complain on their behalf. You must always consider frontline resolution, regardless of how you have received the customer's complaint.

### ***What to do when you receive a complaint***

- 1 On receiving a complaint, you must first decide whether the issue can indeed be defined as a complaint. The customer may express dissatisfaction about more than one issue. This may mean you treat one element as a complaint, while directing the customer to pursue another element through an alternative route.
- 2 If you have received and identified a complaint, record the details on your departmental complaints register.
- 3 Next, decide whether or not the complaint is suitable for frontline resolution. Some complaints will need to be fully investigated before you can give the customer a suitable response. You must escalate these complaints immediately to the investigation stage.
- 4 Where you think frontline resolution is appropriate, you must consider four key questions:
  - What exactly is the customer's complaint (or complaints)?
  - What does the customer want to achieve by complaining?
  - Can I achieve this, or explain why not?
  - If I cannot resolve this, who can help with frontline resolution?

**What exactly is the customer's complaint (or complaints)?**

It is important to be clear about exactly what the customer is complaining of. You may need to ask the customer for more information and probe further to get a full picture.

**What does the customer want to achieve by complaining?**

At the outset, clarify the outcome the customer wants. Of course, the customer may not be clear about this, and you may need to probe further to find out what they expect, and whether they can be satisfied.

**Can I achieve this, or explain why not?**

If you can achieve the expected outcome by providing an on-the-spot apology or explain why you cannot achieve it, you should do so.

The customer may expect more than we can provide. If so, you must tell them as soon as possible.

You are likely to have to convey the decision face to face or on the telephone. If you do so face to face, by telephone or by email, you are not required to write to the customer as well, although you may choose to do so. It is important, however, to keep a full and accurate record of the decision reached and passed to the customer.

**If I can't resolve this, who can help with frontline resolution?**

If you cannot deal with the complaint because, for example, you are unfamiliar with the issues or area involved, pass details of the complaint to someone who can attempt to resolve it.

***Timelines***

Complaints should be acknowledged with three working days. Frontline resolution must be completed within **ten working days**, although in practice we would often expect to resolve the complaint much sooner. In order to deal with complaints promptly we would ask the individual making the complaint to provide any information promptly following a request.

You may need to get more information from other departments to resolve the complaint at this stage. However, it is important to respond to the customer within three working days, either resolving the matter or explaining that their complaint is to be investigated.

***Extension to the timeline***

In exceptional circumstances, where there are clear and justifiable reasons for doing so, you may agree an extension of no more than five working days with the customer. This must

only happen when an extension will make it more likely that the complaint will be resolved at the frontline resolution stage.

When you ask for an extension, you must get authorisation from your Head of Service (or Director), who will decide whether you need an extension to effectively resolve the complaint. Examples of when this may be appropriate include staff being temporarily unavailable. If, however, the issues are so complex that they cannot be resolved in five days, it may be more appropriate to escalate the complaint straight to the investigation stage. You must tell the customer about the reasons for the delay, and when they can expect your response.

If the customer does not agree to an extension but it is unavoidable and reasonable, your Head of Service (or Director) must decide on the extension. You must then tell the customer about the delay and explain the reason for the decision to grant the extension.

It is important that such extensions do not become the norm. Rather, the timeline at the frontline resolution stage should be extended only rarely. All attempts to resolve the complaint at this stage must take no longer than **15 working days** from the date you receive the complaint.

The proportion of complaints that exceed the ten-day limit will be evident from reported statistics. These statistics must go to the Corporate Management Team at least twice a year.

### ***Closing the complaint at the frontline resolution stage***

When you have informed the customer of the outcome, you are not obliged to write to the customer, although you may choose to do so. You must ensure that our response to the complaint addresses all areas that we are responsible for and explains the reasons for our decision. It is also important to keep a full and accurate record of the decision reached and given to the customer. The complaint should then be closed and your departmental complaints register updated accordingly.

### ***When to escalate to the investigation stage***

A complaint must be escalated to the investigation stage when:

- frontline resolution was tried but the customer remains dissatisfied and requests an investigation into the complaint. This may be immediately on communicating the decision at the frontline stage or could be some time later
- the customer refuses to take part in the frontline resolution process
- the issues raised are complex and require detailed investigation
- the complaint relates to serious, high-risk or high-profile issues.

When a previously closed complaint is escalated from the frontline resolution stage, the complaint should be reopened on the departmental complaints register.

Take particular care to identify complaints that might be considered serious, high risk or high profile, as these may require particular action or raise critical issues that need senior management's direct input. FIG defines potential high-risk or high-profile complaints as those that may:

- involve a death or terminal illness
- involve serious service failure, for example major delays in providing, or repeated failures to provide, a service
- generate significant and ongoing press interest
- pose a serious risk to FIG operations
- present issues of a highly sensitive nature, for example concerning:
  - immediate homelessness
  - a particularly vulnerable person
  - child protection.

### **Stage two: investigation**

Not all complaints are suitable for frontline resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints handled at the investigation stage of the complaints handling procedure are typically complex or require a detailed examination before we can state our position. These complaints may already have been considered at the frontline resolution stage, or they may have been identified from the start as needing immediate investigation.

An investigation aims to establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint and to give the customer a full, objective and proportionate response that represents our final position.

### ***What to do when you receive a complaint for investigation***

It is important to be clear from the start of the investigation stage exactly what you are investigating, and to ensure that both the customer and the service understand the investigation's scope.

It may be helpful to discuss and confirm these points with the customer at the outset, to establish why they are dissatisfied and whether the outcome they are looking for sounds realistic. In discussing the complaint with the customer, consider three key questions:

1. What specifically is the customer's complaint or complaints?
2. What does the customer want to achieve by complaining?
3. Are the customer's expectations realistic and achievable?

It may be that the customer expects more than we can provide. If so, you must make this clear to the customer as soon as possible.

Where possible you should also clarify what additional information you will need to investigate the complaint. The customer may need to provide more evidence to help us reach a decision.

Details of the complaint must be recorded on the departmental complaints register. Where appropriate, this will be done as a continuation of frontline resolution. The details must be updated when the investigation ends.

If the investigation stage follows attempted frontline resolution, you must hand over all case notes and associated information to the officer responsible for the investigation, and record that you have done so.

### ***Timelines***

The following deadlines are appropriate to cases at the investigation stage:

- complaints must be acknowledged within **three working days**
- you should provide a full response to the complaint as soon as possible but not later than **20 working days** from the time you received the complaint for investigation.

### ***Extension to the timeline***

Not all investigations will be able to meet this deadline. For example, some complaints are so complex that they require careful consideration and detailed investigation beyond the 20-day limit. However, these would be the exception and you must always try to deliver a final response to a complaint within 20 working days.

If there are clear and justifiable reasons for extending the timescale, the Director will set time limits on any extended investigation, as long as the customer agrees. You must keep the customer updated on the reason for the delay and give them a revised timescale for completion. If the customer does not agree to an extension but it is unavoidable and reasonable, then the Director must consider and confirm the extension. The reasons for an extension might include the following:

- Essential accounts or statements, crucial to establishing the circumstances of the case, are needed from staff, customers or others but they cannot help because of long-term sickness or leave.
- You cannot obtain further essential information within normal timescales.
- Operations are disrupted by unforeseen or unavoidable operational circumstances, for example industrial action or severe weather conditions.
- The customer has agreed to mediation as a potential route for resolution.

These are only a few examples, and you must judge the matter in relation to each complaint. However, an extension would be the exception and you must always try to deliver a final response to the complaint within 20 working days.

As with complaints considered at the frontline stage, the proportion of complaints that exceed the 20-day limit will be evident from reported statistics. These statistics must go to CMT at least twice a year.

### ***Mediation***

Some complex complaints, or complaints where customers and other interested parties have become entrenched in their position, may require a different approach to resolving the complaint. Where appropriate, you may consider using services such as mediation or conciliation using suitably trained and qualified mediators to try to resolve the matter and to reduce the risk of the complaint escalating further.

Mediation will help both parties to understand what has caused the complaint, and so is more likely to lead to mutually satisfactory solutions.

If you and the customer agree to mediation, revised timescales will need to be agreed.

### ***Closing the complaint at the investigation stage***

You must let the customer know the outcome of the investigation, in writing or by their preferred method of contact. Our response to the complaint must address all areas that we are responsible for and explain the reasons for our decision. You must record the decision, and details of how it was communicated to the customer, on the system for recording complaints. You must also make clear to the customer:

- their right to appeal as set out in Stage 3, and
- the time limit for doing so.

### **Stage three: appeal**

There are three stages to FIG's complaint handling procedures. Whilst we hope that we will be able to resolve the complaint at Stage 1 and Stage 2 the individual making a complaint has the right to an appeal. The third and final stage of the complaints procedure is to an appeal. This will be raised as follows within FIG:

<b>Complaints dealt with at Stage 2 by:</b>	<b>Appeal heard by:</b>
Line management	Head of Service
Head of Service	Director
Director	Peer Director

An appeal must be submitted within two months after the day on which the individual who complained receives the response from Stage two.

# Governance of the Complaints Handling Procedure

## *Roles and responsibilities*

Overall responsibility and accountability for the management of complaints lies with the Chief Executive and senior management.

FIG's final position on the complaint must be signed off by an appropriate senior officer (Chief Executive, Director or Head of Service) and we will confirm that this is our final response. This ensures that our senior management own and are accountable for the decision. It also reassures the customer that their concerns have been taken seriously.

**Chief Executive:** The Chief Executive provides leadership and direction in ways that guide and enable us to perform effectively across all services. This includes ensuring that there is an effective complaints handling procedure, with a robust investigation process that demonstrates how we learn from the complaints we receive. The Chief Executive may take a personal interest in all or some complaints, or may delegate responsibility for the complaint handling procedure to senior staff. Regular management reports assure the Chief Executive of the quality of complaints performance.

**Directors:** On the Chief Executive's behalf, directors may be responsible for:

- managing complaints and the way we learn from them
- overseeing the implementation of actions required as a result of a complaint
- investigating complaints
- deputising for the Chief Executive on occasion.

However, directors may decide to delegate some elements of complaints handling (such as investigations and the drafting of response letters) to other senior staff. Where this happens, directors should retain ownership and accountability for the management and reporting of complaints. They may also be responsible for preparing and signing decision letters to customers, so they should be satisfied that the investigation is complete and their response addresses all aspects of the complaint.

**Heads of Service:** may be involved in the operational investigation and management of complaints handling. As senior officers they may be responsible for preparing and signing decision letters to customers, so they should be satisfied that the investigation is complete and their response addresses all aspects of the complaint.

**Complaints investigator:** The complaints investigator is responsible and accountable for the management of the investigation. They may work in a service delivery team, and will be involved in the investigation and in co-ordinating all aspects of the response to the

customer. This may include preparing a comprehensive written report, including details of any procedural changes in service delivery that could result in wider opportunities for learning across FIG.

**All FIG staff:** A complaint may be made to any member of staff within FIG. So all staff must be aware of the complaints handling procedure and how to handle and record complaints at the frontline stage. They should also be aware of who to refer a complaint to, in case they are not able to personally handle the matter. We encourage all staff to try to resolve complaints early, as close to the point of service delivery as possible, and quickly to prevent escalation.

### ***Complaints about senior staff***

Complaints about senior staff can be difficult to handle, as there may be a conflict of interest for the staff investigating the complaint. When serious complaints are raised against senior staff, it is particularly important that the investigation is conducted by an individual who is independent of the situation (a peer director). We must ensure we have strong governance arrangements in place that set out clear procedures for handling such complaints.

### ***Recording, reporting, learning and publicising***

Complaints provide valuable customer feedback. One of the aims of the complaints handling procedure is to identify opportunities to improve services across FIG. We must record all complaints in a systematic way so that we can use the complaints data for analysis and management reporting. By recording and using complaints information in this way, we can identify and address the causes of complaints and, where appropriate, identify training opportunities and introduce service improvements.

### ***Recording complaints***

To collect suitable data it is essential to record all complaints, as follows:

- the customer's name and address
- the date the complaint was received
- the nature of the complaint
- how the complaint was received
- the service the complaint refers to
- the date the complaint was closed at the frontline resolution stage (where appropriate)
- the date the complaint was escalated to the investigation stage (where appropriate)
- action taken at the investigation stage (where appropriate)
- the date the complaint was closed at the investigation stage (where appropriate)
- the outcome of the complaint at each stage
- the underlying cause of the complaint and any remedial action taken.

Each directorate should maintain a register for recording complaints, their outcomes and any resulting action. These provide a detailed record of services that have failed to satisfy customers.

### ***Reporting of complaints***

Complaints details are analysed for trend information to ensure we identify service failures and take appropriate action. Regularly reporting the analysis of complaints information helps to inform management of where services need to improve.

This information should be reported regularly (and at least twice a year) to CMT.

### ***Learning from complaints***

At the earliest opportunity after the closure of the complaint, the complaint handler should always make sure that the customer and staff of the department involved understand the findings of the investigation and any recommendations made.

Senior management will review the information gathered from complaints regularly and consider whether our services could be improved or internal policies and procedures updated.

As a minimum, we must:

- use complaints data to identify the root cause of complaints
- take action to reduce the risk of recurrence
- record the details of corrective action in the complaints file, and
- systematically review complaints performance reports to improve service delivery.

Where we have identified the need for service improvement:

- the action needed to improve services must be authorised
- an officer (or team) should be designated the 'owner' of the issue, with responsibility for ensuring the action is taken
- a target date must be set for the action to be taken
- the designated individual must follow up to ensure that the action is taken within the agreed timescale
- where appropriate, performance in the service area should be monitored to ensure that the issue has been resolved
- we must ensure that FIG staff learn from complaints.

### ***Publicising complaints performance information***

We also report on our performance in handling complaints annually as part of the Annual Governance Statement. This includes performance statistics showing the volumes and types of complaints and key performance details, for example on the time taken and the stage at which complaints were resolved.

### ***Maintaining confidentiality***

Confidentiality is important in complaints handling. It includes maintaining the customer's confidentiality and explaining to them the importance of confidentiality generally. We must always bear in mind legal requirements as well as internal policies on confidentiality and the use of customers' information.

### ***Managing unacceptable behaviour***

People may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. The circumstances leading to a complaint may result in the customer acting in an unacceptable way. Customers who have a history of challenging or inappropriate behaviour, or have difficulty expressing themselves, may still have a legitimate grievance.

A customer's reasons for complaining may contribute to the way in which they present their complaint. Regardless of this, we must treat all complaints seriously and properly assess them. However, we also recognise that the actions of customers who are angry, demanding or persistent may result in unreasonable demands on time and resources or unacceptable behaviour towards our staff. We will, therefore, apply our policies and procedures to protect staff from unacceptable behaviour such as unreasonable persistence, threats or offensive behaviour from customers. Where we decide to restrict access to a customer under the terms of an unacceptable actions policy, we have a procedure in place to communicate that decision, notify the customer of a right of appeal, and review any decision to restrict contact with us. This will allow the customer to demonstrate a more reasonable approach later.

### ***Supporting the customer***

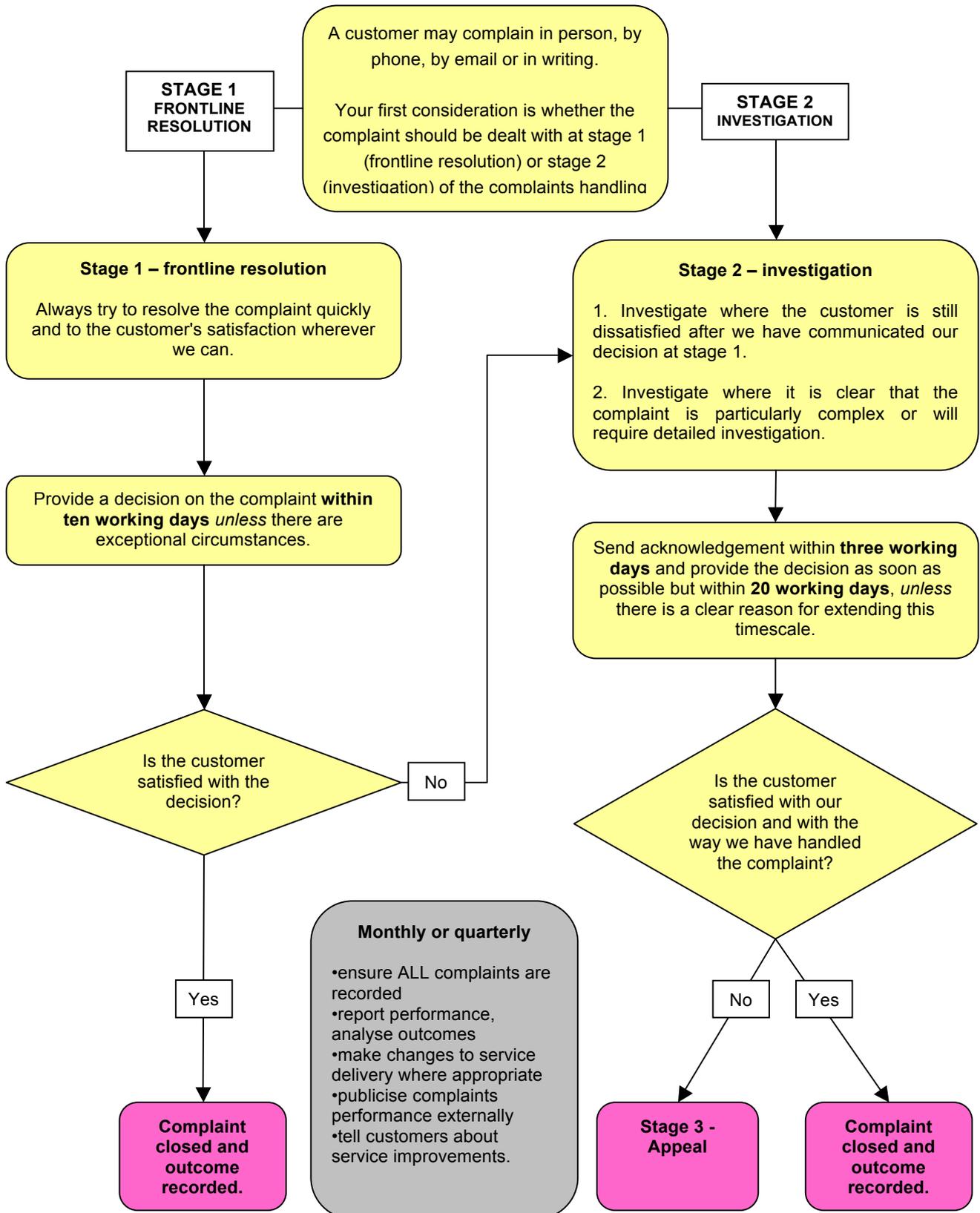
All members of the community have the right to equal access to our complaints handling procedure. We must always take into account our commitment and responsibilities to equality. This includes making reasonable adjustments to our service to help the customer where appropriate.

### ***Time limit for making complaints***

This complaints handling procedure sets a time limit of two months from when the customer first knew of the problem, within which time they may ask us to consider the complaint,

unless there are special circumstances for considering complaints beyond this time. We will apply this time limit with discretion.

## Appendix 1 - The complaints handling procedure



## Appendix 2 Public Leaflet

### Corporate Complaints Procedure

Falkland Islands Government is committed to providing high-quality customer services. **We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.**

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

#### **What is a complaint?**

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

#### **What can I complain about?**

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- our standard of service
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper procedure
- non-compliance with legislation or approved government policy.

Your complaint may involve more than one FIG service or be about someone working on our behalf.

#### **What can't I complain about?**

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service, for example a first-time request for a housing repair
- requests for compensation
- things that are covered by a right of appeal. Here are some examples:
  - If your planning application is refused, you have a right of appeal to ExCo.
  - If you believe your tax assessment is incorrect, you have a right of appeal to the Commissioner of Taxation or Tax Appeals Tribunal.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

### **Who can complain?**

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

### **How do I complain?**

You can complain in person at the departmental office, by phone, in writing, email via our complaints form (attached).

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the department concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff at the department you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

### **How long do I have to make a complaint?**

Normally, you must make your complaint within one months of:

- the event you want to complain about, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than two months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

### **What happens when I have complained?**

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint.

Our complaints procedure has two stages:

#### **Stage one – frontline resolution**

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days and give you our decision at Stage 1 in ten working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next. We might suggest that you take your complaint to Stage 2. You may choose to do this immediately or sometime after you get our initial decision.

### **Stage two – investigation**

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

When using Stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- where appropriate, discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

### **What if I'm still dissatisfied?**

There are three stages to FIG's complaint handling procedures. Whilst we hope that we will be able to resolve your complaint at Stages 1 or 2, if you are not happy with the response you receive at this stage you can go on to appeal the decision.

We hope that it won't be necessary, but occasionally you may still be unhappy after you've received a response to your complaint at Stage 2. The third and final stage of the complaints procedure is to appeal your complaint. This will be raised as follows within FIG:

<b>Complaints dealt with at Stage 2 by:</b>	<b>Appeal heard by:</b>
Line management	Head of Service
Head of Service	Director
Director	Peer Director

### **Getting help to make your complaint**

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

### **Our contact details**

Complaints should be submitted to the relevant department. However, if you have any queries relating to this procedure please contact the office of the Director of Central Services on (500) 28426.

## Quick guide to our complaints procedure

### Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail or in writing.

We have a **three-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.



### Stage 1: frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **ten working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.



### Stage 2: investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** *unless* there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.



### Stage 3: Appeal

We hope that we will have resolved your complaint in Stage 2. However, you can appeal the decision within two months of receiving the outcome of Stage 2. Your appeal will be headed by a more senior officer within FIG.

## FIG Complaints Form

<b>Corporate Complaints – ‘Raising a Complaint’ form</b>		
<p>This form is intended for use when you want to make a complaint about our action, or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.</p> <p>In accordance with FIG’s Corporate Complaints Procedure, FIG aims to give you our decision at Stage 1 within 10 working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.</p>		
<b>Which service within FIG does your complaint relate to?</b>		
<b>Central Services</b>	Court administration <input type="checkbox"/> FIGAS <input type="checkbox"/> Fox Bay Village <input type="checkbox"/> IT <input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure Centre <input type="checkbox"/> Postal and philatelic services <input type="checkbox"/> Tenders and procurement <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Education</b>	FICS <input type="checkbox"/> Further/Higher Education <input type="checkbox"/> IJS (inc. Camp education) <input type="checkbox"/>	Library <input type="checkbox"/> Stanley House <input type="checkbox"/> Training Centre <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Emergency Services</b>	Customs and Immigration <input type="checkbox"/> FIDF <input type="checkbox"/> Fire <input type="checkbox"/>	Major Incidents <input type="checkbox"/> Police and Prisons <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Executive Management</b>	Environmental Planning <input type="checkbox"/> FIGO (London office) <input type="checkbox"/> Gilbert House administration <input type="checkbox"/>	Policy Unit <input type="checkbox"/> SAERI <input type="checkbox"/> Secretariat <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Health &amp; Social Services</b>	KEMH (Dental) <input type="checkbox"/> KEMH (Medical) <input type="checkbox"/>	Social Services <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Human Resources</b>	HR – Stanley <input type="checkbox"/>	Recruitment – FIGO <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Law &amp; Regulation</b>	Legal Services <input type="checkbox"/> Registry <input type="checkbox"/>	Regulation (inc. Civil Aviation) <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Mineral Resources</b>	Mineral Resources <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Natural Resources</b>	Department of Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> FIPASS <input type="checkbox"/>	Fisheries Veterinary service <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PWD</b>	Highways <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Plant and Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Power station <input type="checkbox"/>	Property & Municipal <input type="checkbox"/> Quarry (inc. asphalt production) <input type="checkbox"/> Tenders and procurement <input type="checkbox"/> Water <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Treasury</b>	Internal Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pensions Office <input type="checkbox"/>	Tax Office <input type="checkbox"/> Treasury (general services) <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>When did the problem you are complaining about happen?</b>		
<b>Please give us the main points of your complaints (with some information about each point). Use the space below, or continue on another sheet, if you need to:</b>		

<b>Please give us any background information about the complaint that you think will be helpful</b>	
<b>How have you suffered as a result of what has happened?</b>	
<b>What outcome/result do you want to achieve?</b>	
Please set out how you would like to see your complaint dealt with, and why and how you believe that this will resolve the issue.	
<b>Personal details</b>	
<b>If you are complaining for someone else you must fill in this section and the next section</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	(Person completing form)
<b>Contact details:</b>	(Phone number/email)
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Complaining for someone else (Please fill in this section with their details)</b>	
<b>Their Name:</b>	
<b>Their Contact details:</b>	(Phone number/email)
We need the person affected by the complaint to sign the consent below, if they can, to allow you to complain for them. If they are unable to sign for any reason, please tell us why in the box below.	
I authorise the person named in the section above to make my complaint to FIG. I understand that FIG may give personal information about me and my complaint to this named person.	
<b>Their Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>What is your relationship to this person?</b>	
<b>For completion by Directorate:</b>	
<b>Date form received:</b>	

## **Employee's Guide to Do and Don'ts when customers complain**

### **Do:**

- be aware of your responsibility to try to resolve the complaint or seek help to resolve it
- be aware of service procedures as this may help you to clarify matters for the customer
- say who you are
- ask for the customer's name, address and telephone number
- be sensitive - making a complaint can be stressful, so respond with courtesy, tact and empathy
- listen carefully to what the customer is saying without interrupting. This helps you to get the details right first time and shows that you are taking the matter seriously. Take notes and read them back to the customer to check that you understood the problem
- ask open-ended questions to get more detailed information, this sometimes helps you to find a solution that will satisfy the customer
- provide an apology and explanation if it is clear we have made a mistake
- make sure you agree a course of action that is satisfactory to the customer and to the service. If in doubt, discuss the matter with your line manager
- check that we did what we said we'd do, then follow up by contacting the customer to check that they agree it has been done
- explain the next stage of the procedure if the problem hasn't been resolved to the customer's satisfaction: This will be
  - an explanation of the Investigation stage, or
  - explaining the individual's right to appeal
- record all details of the complaint in line with the correct procedures
- treat all information in confidence.

### **Don't**

- refuse to accept there is a problem, if the customer thinks there is a problem, you must help
- be defensive or argue
- jump to conclusions. Wait until you have the whole story
- make promises you can't keep.