



An Chartlann Náisiúnta  
National Archives

# Policy for Handling Complaints



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## Introduction

This document sets out the National Archives' policy for handling complaints made about our services and facilities. It is important to the National Archives that those who use our facilities and services have a positive user experience. As a public facing institution we are committed to improving the quality of our public offer on an on-going basis.

This policy applies to all those who engage with the National Archives including members of the public, individuals, contractors, suppliers, stakeholders, government departments and bodies and all those who use any of our services, whether visiting our building, accessing our services remotely or writing, emailing or telephoning us.

This policy excludes complaints made about Freedom of Information (Fol) access requests which are handled separately.

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## What is a complaint?

A complaint is where an individual is dissatisfied with our service, whether that dissatisfaction is justified or not, and requires a response or further action on the part of the National Archives.

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# Our Complaints Process

## **We try to make our complaints processes:**

- simple to use and understand for those making a complaint
- reasonable and responsive
- prompt and timely in how a complaint is dealt with
- fair and proportionate, with an opportunity for a full and impartial investigation
- part of our on-going review and evaluation of our services, where lessons learnt from complaints will allow us to improve our services to the public.

## **When you make a complaint to us we commit to:**

- taking a complaint seriously and dealing with it in a timely fashion
- ensuring that you are provided with the name of the staff member who will be responsible with dealing with your complaint
- answering all your points of concern
- providing clear reasons for the decision reached on a complaint

## **Our complaints process will be:**

- fair and transparent
- impartial and unbiased
- thorough, ensuring that all the relevant facts are gathered and that all sides contribute to the process

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## How to complain?

If you have a complaint or are unhappy with any aspect of the National Archives service, you can contact the National Archives or the manager of the service you have been dealing with to let them know your concerns.

The manager will discuss with you or respond to your concerns and if you remain unhappy you can make a formal complaint in writing to the National Archives.

Complaints relating to National Archives service must be made in writing (or equivalent) within one month of the date the alleged incident occurred and must provide the details of the complaint.

Letters/emails of complaint will be acknowledged within ten working days of receipt and will be investigated by the appropriate member of the National Archives Senior Staff. A written response to the complaint will be provided within four working weeks/twenty working days from the date that the National Archives receives your formal complaint.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can, within one calendar month from the date of our final response to your complaint, request an independent internal review. This will only be carried out in exceptional circumstances and will be referred by the Director to a case reviewer in the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the further review, you can contact the Ombudsman.

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## Responsibility to our Staff

The National Archives has a responsibility to ensure that its members of staff are treated fairly if a complaint is made against them. We commit to informing them immediately of any complaint made about them, the full nature of the complaint and to ensuring that they can comment and respond. We also commit to keeping them informed of the progress of any investigation or review as well as the final outcome of the complaints review. If a member of staff makes a complaint about a user of our services, the matter will be looked into by our Senior Team. In the case of a counter-complaint, a separate investigating officer will be assigned to look deal with each complaint to ensure fairness to both parties.

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## Confidentiality

Ensuring confidentiality is important in dealing with any complaint. We commit to ensuring confidentiality when a complaint is made, both for the complainant and for members of staff who have a complaint made against them. We will review and investigate all complaints made discreetly and sensitively and only sharing information when it is a necessary part of the investigation.

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## Policy for dealing with unreasonably persistent enquiries

Our staff will treat people with courtesy, patience and fairness and we expect similar courtesy and reasonable behaviour in return. Very occasionally, we will refuse to respond to a complaint. This will only happen if the person making the complaint is insulting or abusive towards our staff, if their complaint lies outside the service provided by the National Archives or if they refuse to accept that their complaint has been dealt with despite a thorough response/ investigation on our part. We will only do this where it is absolutely necessary, and we will write to the person concerned to explain why we believe this to be the case.

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## Contact details for appeals and complaints

Complaints – Corporate Services  
National Archives  
Dublin 8

email: [info@nationalarchives.ie](mailto:info@nationalarchives.ie)



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