

Complaints Handling Policy - A Quick Guide for Staff

1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a member of the public about the CNPA's action/lack of action/ standard of service provided.
2. Anyone who receives, requests or is affected by our services can make a complaint.
3. Any member of staff may receive a complaint, which can be verbal (over the phone or in person), by e-mail or letter, or even on-line.
4. The first stage of the complaints resolution process is "Frontline Resolution" – i.e. issues that are straightforward and easily resolved (just an apology may be sufficient) and requiring little or no investigation. **Any** member of staff may deal with and resolve a complaint at this stage. Resolution must be completed within 5 days. Log the complaint in the [Complaints Log](#).
5. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. someone is on leave and you need to speak to them to resolve the complaint), you may agree with the customer an extension of no more than 5 days. This must be authorised by a Head of Service. So at the most, frontline resolution could take 10 days.
6. A complaint can be escalated to Investigation stage (sometimes called "stage 2") if the customer is not be happy with your response and asks for it to be dealt with at stage 2. It can also be escalated if you feel you can't deal with the complaint at stage 1 (frontline resolution) as its complex, serious or high risk. Escalation should be to the appropriate Head of Service who might investigate the complaint themselves, or nominate another member of staff to conduct the investigation.
7. Once a complaint is escalated beyond stage 1, it must be acknowledged (there is an [acknowledgement letter template](#)) by the Head of Service within 3 working days of receipt, the date of receipt being: -
 - a. the day it was transferred from frontline stage to investigation,
 - b. the date the customer asks for it to be investigated as they are not happy with the frontline resolution response,
 - c. the date the complaint is received if you identify from the start that it needs investigation.
8. The Head of Service must make an appropriate Director aware of the complaint.
9. The Head of Service (or Director) must provide a full response to the complaint not later than 20 working days from the time it was escalated to the investigation stage.
10. Some complaints are so complex that they may require delayed investigation beyond the 20 days. A time limit must be set by the Director on an extended investigation, and this must be agreed by the customer.
11. **All complaints, no matter how minor MUST be recorded, by the person dealing with the complaint, on the complaints log, which can be found on the R drive [Corporate Services/Corporate Management/Complaints/Complaints Log](#) .**
12. Laura Byers will have oversight of the complaints log and will help staff complete it appropriately. She will also keep an eye on timelines and will chase you if you are approaching the deadline for resolution.

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Audit & Risk Committee Paper 5 Annex I 01/07/16

13. Every complaint should be given a complaint folder number, and all complaint responses should be saved in the folder number for that complaint, in the complaints responses folder (which can be found on the R drive – [Corporate services/Corporate Management/Complaint/Responses EY + 3](#))

