



EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage 1 of Complaints Procedure

- 1) A verbal/written/email complaint is made directly to a staff member.
- 2) The staff member shall advise the complainant of the company procedures and ask them to complete an **External Complaints Form**. *This form is available internally on the public server under policies and also externally on the company website.*
- 3) The complaint both verbal and written must be communicated to the Complaints Officer (CEO).
- 4) The Complaints Officer (CEO) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint.
- 5) If the complaint is about a person, it must be in writing and contain the person's name, and give details such as dates and locations.
- 6) If the complaint is about a staff member, this must be communicated to the staff member concerned. They will be entitled to be accompanied by a colleague/staff representative in any meetings/discussions which take place about the complaint.
- 7) The staff member along with their line manager meets with the complainant to clarify the issues and tries to resolve the matter.
- 8) If the matter is addressed to the satisfaction of the complainant, no further action is required. This must be noted and then signed and dated by the complainant, staff member and line manager.
- 9) This should be completed within two weeks of the complaint being made.
- 10) Complaints made to a Board member about Waterford Leader Partnership should be communicated directly to the CEO for follow up. Complaints should not be dealt with/mediated by Board members.

Stage 2 of Complaints Procedure

- 1) The complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 and is invited to make a written complaint to the WLP Complaints Officer (CEO).
- 2) If the complaint is about a person, it must be in writing and contain the person's name, and give details such as dates and locations.
- 3) An acknowledgement is sent to the complainant by post/email within 5 working days.
- 4) The Complaints Officer (CEO) discusses the matter with the staff member(s) or others concerned and meets with the complainant.
- 5) A response is sent to the complainant within 20 working days of the complaint being made.
- 6) If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complaint will be sent to the Board's Audit Committee for adjudication and a response within 15 working days.
- 7) If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Audit Committee, the matter will be referred to an independent third party for adjudication. WLP will provide a list of three mediators. The choice of mediator will be agreed with the complainant.

Outcomes

- A. If the complaint is upheld, the Complaints Officer will take appropriate measures to address the matter.
- B. After an investigation, recommendations may be made by the Complaints Officer to modify WLP practices/policies/procedures

Parameters

- The complaint must be made within 6 months of the event/issue arising.
- A complaint can be made about any service, project or action of WLP on the basis that it is considered to be unfair or has a negative impact on a person/business/community. *(Please note that in the case of the Rural Development LEADER Programme there will be a different appeals process in place for projects that are deemed ineligible or not recommend for funding).*
- Privacy and confidentiality will be respected in dealing with complaints.

