



Making a complaint

Introduction

If you want to make a complaint, we have a procedure for you to use. This leaflet explains the procedure. Making a complaint will not affect your chances of getting a grant from us and it will not affect the level of service you receive.

What can I complain about?

You can complain if you think that:

- 'maladministration' has taken place (for example, if we have delayed, made mistakes in or failed to follow the procedures in our application process);
- we have failed to give you access to information or have given you incorrect advice or information;
- we have not treated you courteously; or
- we have discriminated against you or not treated you fairly.

We will keep all complaints confidential. If you make a complaint we will treat you politely and with respect, and we expect you to treat our staff in the same way.

What you cannot complain about

You may be disappointed if we turn down your application for funding, but you cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against our decision on giving a grant if we have followed our decision-making process correctly.

You cannot complain about our published policies or any government policy. If you have any comments about our policies, send these to The Director. If you want to comment on any government policy on Millennium projects you should contact National Lottery Distribution and Communities Division at DCMS.

You should not use this complaints procedure to tell us about potential fraud at the Millennium Commission. You should report this to our Head of Internal Audit or the police.

We can only look at your application for funding again if:

- we discover (through dealing with a complaint) that we did not follow the published procedures for assessing your application;
- you can show that we have misunderstood a significant part of your application; or
- you can show that we did not take notice of relevant information.

You may not be sure what information you should include or how best to set out your complaint. You should set out the facts as clearly as possible, in a logical order. Remember to include important details and dates where possible. We can give you information about how we will process your complaint. Our contact details are given in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this document.

How do I make a complaint?

Stage one

If you are not happy with the service you have received, contact the person you first dealt with. They will try to put things right. We hope that we can resolve matters as quickly as possible in this way.

Stage two

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you can make a complaint. You must do this within four weeks of receiving our response.

You can make a complaint by writing or sending an audio tape or CD to The Secretary to the Commission.

Please tell us:

- what happened;
- when it happened;
- who dealt with you; and
- what you would like us to do to put things right.

Also tell us if there is anything we need to know about how to contact you (for example, if you would like us to reply by textphone or on audio tape).

If you are unable to make your complaint in writing, please contact the Secretary to the Commission.

When will I hear from you?

Within three working days of receiving your complaint we will write or phone you to say that we have received it. We will also tell you how you can contact the person who is dealing with your complaint and when you can expect a reply.

In most cases, you will receive a full reply to your complaint within 10 working days. If we cannot give a full reply in this time, we will tell you why and when you are likely to receive it.

Stage three

If you are not satisfied with the Director's reply, you can refer your complaint to the independent complaints reviewer (ICR).

Once you have referred your complaint to the ICR, we would not normally continue to keep in touch with you unless you give us any further information we need to consider.

The ICR cannot consider complaints that have not gone through the procedure set out in this document. If you want the ICR to consider your complaint, you must write to them, or send them an audio tape or CD, within four weeks of receiving our chief executive's reply.

The ICR is unbiased and hears both sides of the complaint.

The ICR is not part of our organisation and their investigations and recommendations are independent. You can ask the ICR to look at your complaint, or the Secretary to the Commission can ask them to do this. There is no charge for using the ICR.

The ICR has the power to decide whether or not to investigate a complaint, and he or she will explain their reasons if they decide not to investigate it.

If the ICR investigates your complaint and finds that it is justified, he or she will recommend ways for us to put things right, and how to prevent a similar situation in future. We will normally make any changes the ICR recommends as quickly as possible.

The ICR cannot reverse funding decisions or make comments or changes to our legal responsibilities and policies on awarding grants.

To contact the ICR see 'Getting in touch' below.

Other ways to make a complaint

The Parliamentary Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (known as the Parliamentary Ombudsman) investigates complaints by members of the public who have suffered injustice because of maladministration by public organisations. The Parliamentary Ombudsman also looks at complaints about being refused access to official information before 1 January 2005.

By law, the Ombudsman is independent of the Government and the civil service, and has wide powers to investigate.

You will need to send your complaint to the Ombudsman through your Member of Parliament (MP). You can contact MPs at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. You should normally refer your complaint to your MP within one year of your complaint arising.

The Ombudsman examines complaints about maladministration. This includes:

- faulty procedures or failing to follow correct procedures; and
- mistakes in handling someone's complaint that have not been put right.

The Ombudsman can question 'discretionary' decisions (for example, funding decisions) only if there is evidence that we did not follow the correct procedures when we made the decisions.

The Ombudsman does not normally investigate complaints if:

- there are other ways of putting things right (for example, an independent tribunal);
- you could take your complaint to court;
- you refer the case to an MP more than 12 months after the complaint arose; or
- it has not been through our complaints procedures first.

The Ombudsman's services are free.

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman - see 'Getting in touch'.

Complaints about treatment of requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 may be made to the Information Commissioner – see ‘Getting in Touch’.

Judicial review

A judicial review is where a judge examines your complaint to see whether we have behaved illegally. The judge cannot rule that we must change a funding decision, but he or she can ask us to reconsider our decision.

Access to information

We must keep to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Our publication scheme gives details of what information we make available to the public. We will extend the range of this list in the future, whenever it is possible for us to do so.

You can get copies of the code of practice and our publication scheme by visiting www.millennium.gov.uk or phoning 020 7880 2001.

We will publish information if it is in the public interest for us to do so. We will make this decision using the Freedom of Information Act and guidance issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Your personal information

If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint. We may also give your personal information to other people and organisations if we have to do so by law or if we are allowed to do so under the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Equal opportunities

We are committed to equal opportunities and take complaints about discrimination seriously.

We may use complaints about discrimination to review our policies and procedures. This is to make sure we treat everyone equally.

Comments and suggestions

We welcome comments and suggestions as these can help us improve our services. Please send any comments or suggestions to the Secretary to the Commission.

Getting in touch

The Millennium Commission
1 Plough Place
London
EC4A 1DE

Tel: 020 7880 2090
Fax: 020 7880 2024
Email: info@millennium.gov.uk (for the attention of the Secretary to the Commission)

Nicholas Elphick
Head of Internal Audit – Millennium Commission
KPMG
One Canada Square
London
E14 5AG

The Parliamentary Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP
Helpline on: 0845 015 4033
Email: OPCA.Enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

National Lottery Distribution and Communities Division
Department for Culture Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London WC1Y 2DH
Website: www.culture.gov.uk

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700
website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk