



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Portsmouth Mediation Service (PMS) values comments and feedback about its service and the quality of the way in which it conducts its business. Complaints and other such comments will be used to inform the PMS and stimulate changes to policies and practices, leading to improved services for its users.

Complaints may be about:

- ◆ The standard of service provided
- ◆ The behaviour of Office staff, Assessment Officers, or Mediators
- ◆ Actual or perceived discrimination
- ◆ Policies or procedures

As an organisation focussed towards individual users and wishing to provide good services to them, the PMS will respond to any reports of dissatisfaction or complaint which it receives. This same form of response is offered also to organisations obtaining services through the PMS.

Any complaints received and the outcome of investigations will be reported, without disclosure of names or other identifiable details, to the Management Committee of the PMS. This is to enable the Committee to monitor the performance of the service and to identify and implement improvements to it.

The Complaints Process

Throughout this Complaints Process, the term “complaint” refers to any form of dissatisfaction or concern, etc, or groups of complaints, dissatisfactions or concerns.

Similarly, the word “complainant” refers to the person making the complaint.

The Complaints Procedure covers the Portsmouth Assessment Service (PAS) element of the PMS’s business, in addition to the main mediation work.

In the case of complaints regarding PMS Assessment activities, notification of the receipt of a complaint will be made to the relevant Portsmouth City Council Housing Official responsible for the monitoring of the working of the PAS arrangement.

The outcome of the (PAS) complaint will also be reported to the relevant Portsmouth City Council Officer.

Elements of the Complaints Processes where the onus or responsibility for action lies with complainants are shown in *italic* script.

PORTSMOUTH MEDIATION SERVICE		
COMPLAINTS PROCESS		
REF.	ACTION	PERSON
Beginning of Complaints Process and Procedure		
1.0	Making the complaint	
1.1	<i>The complainant should notify the Service Manager of the Portsmouth Mediation Service Manager of the complaint.</i> <i>Complaints should be notified as soon as possible after the incident(s) giving rise to them.</i>	Complainant
1.2	<i>This may be done by letter, telephone, fax, or e-mail.</i>	
1.3	<i>The Information provided should include:</i> - <i>the complainant's contact details; and,</i> - <i>information about the matters which have given rise to the complaint.</i>	
2.0	Receipt of the complaint	
2.1	The Service Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two working days.	Service Manager
2.2	<i>Should the complainant <u>not</u> receive such a notification within five working days (one calendar week) of sending the complaint, contact should be made with the Service Manager to check whether or not the complaint has been received.</i>	Complainant
2.3	In the case of a complaint regarding PMS Assessment activities, the Service Manager will notify the relevant Portsmouth City Council Housing Officer responsible for monitoring the working of the PAS arrangement.	Service Manager
3.0	Investigation of the complaint	
3.1	The Service Manager will carry out any investigations relevant to the complaint.	Service Manager

3.2	<p>Relevant information relating to the investigation of the complaint may be disclosed to individuals involved in providing the service.</p> <p>In view of the nature of the PMS's business, normally it will be necessary to disclose the name of the person making the complaint to those involved within the service.</p>	
3.3	The Service Manager may try to resolve the matter giving rise to the complaint.	
4.0	Response to the complaint	
4.1	<p>The Service Manager will provide a response to the complaint within ten working days.</p> <p>This response usually will be given by letter.</p> <p>Should it not be possible to reply within that time, the delay and the reasons for it will be notified to the complainant.</p>	Service Manager
4.2	If it was not possible to reply within the ten working days, updates as to progress will be given at intervals of ten working days - until such time as the response is made.	
4.3	In the case of a complaint regarding PMS Assessment activities, the Service Manager will notify the relevant PCC Housing officer responsible for monitoring the working of the PAS arrangement that the complaint remains unresolved and, subsequently, that a further response has been made.	
<p>Usually this should be the end of the Complaints Process, as the complaint will have been answered to the satisfaction of the complainant.</p> <p>Should that <u>not</u> be the case, then the following sections referenced 5 to 8 apply.</p>		
5.0	Dissatisfaction with the response to the complaint	
5.1	<i>If the complainant is <u>not</u> satisfied with the response received, the Service Manager should be notified within twenty working days (or one calendar month).</i>	Complainant
5.1	<i>This normally should be done by letter, fax, or e-mail.</i>	
5.3	<i>The specific reasons for the dissatisfaction with the response should be reported.</i>	

6.0	Further response	
6.1	The Service Manager will carry out any additional investigations relevant to the complaint.	Service Manager
6.2	A further response will be made within ten working days. Should this not be possible, notification will be given of the delay together with the expected response time.	
6.3	In the case of a complaint regarding PMS Assessment activities, the Service Manager will notify the relevant PCC Housing Manager responsible for monitoring the working of the PAS arrangement both that the complaint remains unresolved and, subsequently, that a further response has been made.	
7.0	Remaining dissatisfaction following the further response	
7.1	<i>If the dissatisfaction or complaint is still <u>not</u> answered to the complainant's satisfaction, the Service Manager should be notified within ten working days.</i>	Complainant
8.0	Next stage investigation of the complaint and response	
8.1	The complaint and the dissatisfaction with the response will be referred by the Service Manager to: either - the Chair of the PMS Management Committee (in the case of a complaint about PMS services) or - the Service Manager's Line Manager (in the case of a complaint about PAS services).	Service Manager
8.2	In the case of a complaint regarding PMS Assessment activities, the Service Manager will notify the relevant PCC Housing Manager responsible for monitoring the working of the PAS arrangement that a further response still has been requested.	
8.3	The Chair of the Management Committee / Line Manager will make contact with the complainant within ten working days of the referral of the complaint being received. This may be by telephone, letter, fax, or e-mail.	Chair / Line Manager

8.4	Attempt will be made to answer the complaint and the dissatisfaction with the response. If this is carried out verbally, a written communication “summing up” the position reached will be sent.	
<p>This may be the end of the Complaints Process, as the complaint will have been answered to the satisfaction of the complainant.</p> <p>Should that <u>not</u> be the case, then the following section referenced 9 applies.</p>		
9.0	Final stage of the complaint process	
9.1	<i>If the complaint or the response to the complaint remains <u>not</u> answered to the complainant’s satisfaction, the complainant should notify the Chair of the Management Committee / Line Manager within ten working days (two calendar weeks).</i>	Complainant
9.2	The complainant may be invited to meet the PMS Management Committee.	Chair / Line Manager
9.3	<i>Should such an invitation be offered, the complainant must accept it in order for further consideration to be given to the complaint and dissatisfaction with the response.</i>	Complainant
9.4	Attempt will be made to answer the complaint and the dissatisfactions with the responses. A written communication “summing up” the position reached will be sent.	Chair / Line Manager
9.5	In the case of a complaint regarding PMS Assessment activities, the Service Manager will notify the relevant PCC Officer responsible for monitoring the working of the PAS arrangement of the final outcome.	Service Manager
This is the end of the Complaints Process and Procedure.		

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