



Complaints Policy



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Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	What is a complaint?	4
3	Who can complain?	5
4	Making a complaint	6
5	Undertaking to complainants	7
6	Process, Escalation and Review	8
7	Vexatious complainants	9
8	Review	11

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1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Contract objectives are:

- To provide a brighter future for residents and businesses by transforming our Island Roads and streetscene whilst supporting the Authority to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits
- To ensure the provision of a high standard, fit for purpose highway network to meet the needs and aspirations of residents, business and visitors for the movement of goods and people
- To promote sustainable transport options and initiatives by ensuring the availability and maintenance of the whole physical highway and appropriate traffic management
- To provide a comprehensive and seamless service for all parts of the highway, fence to fence, both in built up areas and the countryside with appropriate standards and use of materials to reflect local distinctiveness and character
- To create a safe highway environment within a well-managed public realm/streetscene
- To create a highway maintenance industry that acts as a stimulus for the economy

1.1.2 Occasionally, things go wrong and when this happens Island Roads aims to put things right quickly, wherever possible.

1.1.3 The aims and objectives of this policy are to:

- Improve the quality of the services we provide
- Improve our relations with service users
- Encourage best practice by our staff who will be aware of the day-to-day concerns of our service users
- Operate within the statutory, regulatory and legal framework
- Value diversity recognising and valuing all and ensuring that everyone can use the complaints policy.
- Encourage service users to tell us when they are not happy with our services
- Learn from any complaints made by users to improve our services
- Ensure service users have their views heard; receive a good quality service that includes prompt action when our performance is below standard.

2 What is a complaint?

- 2.1.1 A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction with our services, for example if we have done something wrong, failed to do something we should have, done something we shouldn't have, or provided a poor standard of service.
- 2.1.2 A complaint is not an appeal against a decision that has been properly formed, despite perhaps not being the decision that the complainant had hoped for.
- 2.1.3 It is also not a report of a defect on the network that needs attention – these will be dealt with as a routine enquiry.
- 2.1.4 If your complaint is about the conduct of a member of staff, rather than their delivery of a service, these are normally dealt with through our internal disciplinary policy and procedure. The line manager, or another senior officer, will usually investigate any complaint about a member of staff. You will be advised at the time you make your complaint, which elements of your complaint can be dealt with under the complaints process and which will be dealt with under Island Roads' internal management arrangements.
- 2.1.5 We take complaints against staff very seriously, but it will not usually be possible to keep you informed of the detailed progress of an investigation or to advise you of the specific outcome of any disciplinary action taken. We will advise you, however, what action has been taken to resolve your complaint.

3 Who can complain?

3.1.1 Anyone can complain if they believe Island Roads has:

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something it should have done
- Done something it should not have done
- Provided a poor standard of service

3.1.2 Examples include:

- Not responded to an enquiry in a reasonable amount of time
- Not completed something we agreed to do
- Speeding vehicles
- Staff behaviour

4 Making a complaint

- 4.1.1 Complaints can be made by telephone (822440), by email info@islandroads.com , via our website www.islandroads.com or in person at St Christopher House, 42 Daish way, Newport, Isle of Wight.
- 4.1.2 Please tell us clearly what has gone wrong, with as much factual information as possible.
- 4.1.3 Complaints that are unclear or very general may be difficult to investigate and we may require more information to investigate further.
- 4.1.4 Please give us any information we ask for and tell us what you would like us to consider doing to put matters right.
- 4.1.5 Please remain calm and treat our staff in a courteous way and remember that we are trying to help.

5 Undertaking to complainants

5.1.1 We undertake that complainants will:

- Not suffer any penalty or discrimination as a result of making a complaint
- Have their complaint taken seriously, investigated and get a reasoned reply and for us to have tried to understand things from their point of view
- Receive a courteous and honest reply

6 Process, Escalation and Review

6.1 Stage One

- 6.1.1 Where a complaint has been made about an aspect of Island Roads service, this will be responded to in full by an appropriate officer within five (5) Business Days of receipt.
- 6.1.2 Matters that are complex, controversial or may have an impact on reputation will be brought to the attention of the Customer Services Manager.
- 6.1.3 Where a complaint has been made which is of a politically sensitive nature, this will be copied to the Isle of Wight Council Contract Management Team (CMT) for review and action.

6.2 Stage Two

- 6.2.1 Where a complainant has contacted Island Roads to advise that they are not happy with the initial response which they have received, the complaint will be immediately (within normal business hours or a reasonable timescale where the complaint is received out of hours) escalated to the Customer Services Manager for further action and advice, and copied to the Contract Performance Manager.
- 6.2.2 A response, under, stage 2 of the Complaints Policy will be issued by either the Customer Services Manager or the Contract Performance Manager, as appropriate, within twenty (20) Business Days.

7 Vexatious complainants.

7.1.1 A very small minority of complainants make complaints that are habitual or vexatious, in that they persist unreasonably with their complaint, or make complaints in a manner which is deemed unacceptable; for example use of abusive language.

7.1.2 This may involve making serial complaints about different matters, or continuing to raise the same or similar matters over and over again. This can hinder Island Roads consideration of individual's complaints and the ability of our staff to provide a quality service to customers as a whole.

7.1.3 Where complainants:

- Refuse to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of assistance with this from staff;
- Persist in pursuing a complaint where the complaints process as outlined above has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted;
- Refuse to co-operate with the complaints investigation process or insist on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints policy, procedure or good practice;
- Make groundless complaints about employees dealing with the complaints or attempting to use the complaints procedure to pursue a personal vendetta against an employee or team;
- Make unreasonable complaints which impose a significant burden on resources of Island Roads and where the complaint:
 - Clearly does not have any serious purpose or value
 - Is designed to cause disruption or annoyance
 - Has the effect of harassing the business
 - Is frequently lengthy, complicated and stressful for staff
 - Presents contradictory information or views
 - Can otherwise fairly be characterised as obsessive or manifestly unreasonable
- Refuse to accept information for no apparent good reason;
- Introduce trivial or irrelevant new information or raise large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are fully answered;
- Lodge numbers of complaints in batches over a period of time, resulting in related complaints being at different stages of the complaints procedure;
- Pursue a complaint or complaints with Island Roads and at the same time with several of the following: a Member of Parliament, a Councillor, the Ethical Standards Committee or the Police in a 'scattergun' approach;

- Present the same issues repeatedly but never accept the explanation or outcomes - this can take the form of excessive phone calls, visits or written communications;
- Display aggressive behaviour towards staff which may be expressed in verbal abuse or threatening, threatened or actual physical harm;
- Approach different staff repeatedly about the same issue.

7.1.4 It may be necessary to address unacceptable behaviour by restricting contact with our organisation.

7.1.5 Where customer behaviour is deemed unacceptable, the Service Director will review the case to ensure that the case has been handled correctly.

7.1.6 The following can be used, either singularly or in combination depending on each case, and at the discretion of the Service Director:

7.1.6.1 Where the Service Director has confirmed that unacceptable behaviour has occurred, the Service Director will advise the complainant in writing that they have confirmed that the substantive issues have been considered and that restricted access to the service may apply should this behaviour continue. Where this conduct continues, the complainant will be advised in writing that they will be either:

- Restricted from the service for a 12 month period; or
- Required to conduct all further contact in a specific form only (i.e. by letter or to a specific contact only).

7.1.6.2 Where a member of staff has been threatened, either physically or verbally, the Service Director will advise the complainant that their access to the service will be withdrawn indefinitely with immediate effect.

8 Review

- 8.1.1 The Customer Service Manager will be responsible for reporting on and reviewing the performance and impact of this Complaints Policy on a regular basis.