



**LIVERPOOL  
CITY REGION**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY



**METROMAYOR**  
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

# Customer Feedback Guidance for Making a Comment

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# 1. The purpose and scope of this Guidance Statement

The purpose of our Customer Comments Management Procedure is to set out a standardised approach for processing comments received by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA).

## 1.1 Guidance Statement

LCRCA is committed to providing high quality, value for money services to our customers and recognises that customer feedback is an essential element for the improvement and development of services.

This document sets out a framework and our approach for dealing with customer feedback and resolving customer complaints. It also emphasises the importance of prompt resolution wherever possible and set out the timescales for responding to complaints fairly.

## 1.2 Our Aims

We aim to respond to all complaints that require investigation within 14 days. We are committed to putting our customers first and providing excellent customer service. We aim to achieve this by:

- ✓ Ensuring that our complaints process is accessible
- ✓ Customers are listened to and treated with courtesy and empathy
- ✓ We aim to resolve most of our complaints at first point of contact where this can be achieved, with an explanation or an apology when something has gone wrong
- ✓ We will deal with your complaint fairly and when appropriate with anonymity
- ✓ Complaints are acknowledged, recorded, monitored and evaluated
- ✓ We will tell you what is happening with your complaint and we will do everything we can to help you
- ✓ We will learn from your complaints and use them to improve our services
- ✓ Complaints are handled confidentially and in accordance with our Data Protection principles
- ✓ All staff handling complaints receive appropriate support and training

# 2. Definitions

## **2.1 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA)**

We work together to make investments in areas that have a real impact on our communities, such as transport, employment, culture, digital and housing. By using the devolved powers, we have, we can make a real and meaningful difference to the lives of the people living and working in the area.

## **2.2 Merseytravel**

Merseytravel is a distinct statutory entity from the Combined Authority and acts as the Executive body that provides professional, strategic and operational transport advice to the Liverpool City Region, Combined Authority

## **2.3 Compliments**

We value positive feedback in order to understand what we are getting right. We will capture and record all positive feedback at the first point of contact. We will ensure that all compliments are passed to the relevant service area or employee and we will use this feedback to inform future services and reinforce positive behaviour across the organisation.

## **2.4 Comments and Suggestions**

Often people feel more comfortable about suggesting improvements rather than complaining formally. We may not always be able to act on every suggestion, but we will endeavour to do so wherever possible and appropriate.

## **2.5 Complaints**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction of our performance, products and/or services that requires an informal or formal response, communicated verbally, electronically or in writing. Anyone affected by the delivery of our services can make a complaint. We recognise the importance of resolving customer complaints both efficiently and effectively to achieve an amicable outcome wherever possible.

## **3. What Complaints can we investigate**

We can investigate complaints relating to performance, services that we provide and staff behaviour (please also **see section 4** Complaints Relating to Businesses We Do Business With

Before submitting a complaint please ensure that you are raising your complaint with the correct organisation. The LCRCA has not replaced the role of the Local Authorities, who remain responsible for delivering the vast amount of public services within local communities. Your Local Authority is the organisation to which you pay your Council Tax.

### **3.1 Exclusions**

There are times when we will not consider complaints under this policy these may include:

- ✓ An initial request for service
- ✓ Complaints about Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) or nuisance. Such complaints will be handled in accordance with our ASB framework: <https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/contact-us/customer-comments/>  
Complaints will only be handled by this policy when the customer/complainant believes that we have not followed our ASB process
- ✓ Complaints about services that we are not responsible for delivering
- ✓ Complaints where legal action has or is being taken about the same issue
- ✓ Complaints in relation to an issue which is over 6 months old
- ✓ Complaints that have already been fully investigated under this policy
- ✓ Concessionary Passes, as these are subject to a separate appeals process: <https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/tickets-and-pricing/over-60s/>  
<https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/tickets-and-pricing/people-with-disabilities/>

### **3.2 Mersey Tunnels Police**

Complaints about Mersey Tunnels Police are also subject to this process. All complaints regarding the conduct of Mersey Tunnels Police officers will be fully investigated.

Mersey Tunnels Police do not fall under the remit of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and the same applies to the previous organisation namely the Independent Police Complaints Commissions (IPCC).

For the avoidance of doubt, we are unable to discuss or disclose the outcome of any investigation until all legal proceedings in relation to the

incident have been concluded. Whereby the outcome of the investigation has a direct bearing upon the legal case in question, then this will be disclosed accordingly.

#### **4. Time in Which to Submit Your Complaint**

A complaint should be made as soon as possible after the date on which the event occurred or came to the complainant's notice. If a complaint is received more than 6 months later. We reserve the right not to consider the complaint. In reaching any decision, in this regard, we will consider whether there was good reason for not making the complaint sooner and whether, despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

#### **5. Complaints About Businesses We Do Business With**

This Customer Comments Policy applies to all businesses that we do business with.

If your complaint relates to a supplier or operator including Merseyrail, Arriva and Stagecoach etc. We will be able to work with the third party, to fully investigate your complaint and co-ordinate a shared response.

Depending on the nature of your complaint, it may be necessary to share your personal details (if you have given permission), by passing the details of your complaint directly to the third party organisation to manage in accordance with their own complaint management procedure.

Please see our [Fair Processing Notice](#) for more information. Hard copies are also available on request.

If you are not willing to share your data in this way, then it may not be possible to resolve your complaint fully or at all.

#### **6. How to give feedback or make a complaint**

We recognise that occasionally things may go wrong and when they do, you can tell us by contacting us in a few ways:

You can make a complaint via:

**Website:**        [Merseytravel](#) or LCRCA Customer Portal.

**E-mail:**        [ask@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk](mailto:ask@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk)

**Phone: 0151 330 1000**

Lines are open from 7:00am - 8:00pm, Mondays to Fridays, 8:00am - 8:00pm, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. Closed on Christmas Day

**Social Media: @LpoolCityRegion @Merseytravel #AskMerseytravel**

**Post: Comments Team**

**No 1 Mann Island**

**Liverpool**

**L3 1BN**

To help us with our investigation please include any or all the following information:

- ✓ Your name and contact detail
- ✓ Details of your complaint and supporting documents
- ✓ Date and time
- ✓ Location – including start point and destination (where applicable)
- ✓ Copy of your ticket or travel (where applicable)
- ✓ Any other relevant information that may help us to resolve your complaint.

If you prefer, you can ask a representative, friend or relative to act on your behalf. However, we may need your consent.

## **7. Accessibility**

We are committed to providing services that are easy to use and accessible to all our customers. The document will be published on our website and available in a variety of formats on request. Staff will also provide any assistance that may be required for example:

- ✓ Assisting with making a complaint
- ✓ Making appropriate arrangement for customers who have specific requirements e.g. large print, braille, translations etc.
- ✓ Arranging for an interpreter where appropriate

## **8. Anonymous Complaints**

It is good practice to investigate and respond to all complaints and this can include occasions when the source of the complaint is unknown. Anonymous complaints may be dealt with in accordance with the complaints procedure and the outcome will be held on our system. Anonymous complaints will therefore be dealt with on a discretionary basis.

## **9. Petitions**

A petition will be considered when 10 or more people jointly complain about the same issue or concern. Petitions will be logged and dealt with in accordance with the formal complaint's procedure.

When a petition is received, we will ask the group to nominate a spokesperson or key point of contact and all subsequent contact and correspondence will be managed via the nominated spokesperson.

This process is separate to the Ordinary Meeting of the LCRCA where a member of the public can submit a valid statement;

<https://moderngov.merseytravel.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13491>

## **10. Our Complaints Handling Process**

The LCRCA has a three stage complaints process. We encourage resolution informally at the first point of contact wherever possible:

### **10.1 Informal – First Point of Contact Resolution**

This is the first opportunity for us to resolve a complaint informally with any of our staff, who will do their best to put things right for you by focusing on offering an apology and finding a quick resolution to the issue.

If your complaint requires further investigation and we are unable to resolve immediately, we will escalate your complaint to stage one of our formal complaints process.

### **10.2 Stage One – Investigation**

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and provide you with a unique reference number, should you need to contact us again. The assigned Investigating Officer will investigate your complaint and respond to you directly using your preferred method of communication within 14 days of receipt. The Investigating Officer may need to extend this timeline and will keep you informed as necessary.

Our response will include details on how to request your complaint is considered at Stage 2 of our procedure, should you remain dissatisfied.

### 10.3 Stage One - Review

You can ask your Investigating Officer to review the outcome of your complaint with a view to reaching a mutually agreed resolution. If you are unable to achieve an amicable resolution, you can request that your complaint is escalated to stage 2 of our Complaints Process, which will be considered by a more senior Investigating Officer

### 10.4 Stage Two

If you are unable to accomplish a resolution at Stage One of the process and you remain unhappy with the outcome, you can progress to Stage Two of our process. You can do this by contacting us at [comments@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk](mailto:comments@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk) and quoting your complaint reference number (in the subject box if using electronic correspondence) or using any of the other contact methods listed in **section 6**.

You must summarise the key reasons for progressing to Stage Two and if possible, inform us of what we could do differently to help resolve your complaint.

A more senior Investigating Officer will contact you shortly after receiving your request, to escalate your complaint to the second stage or our formal complaints process, to advise if your complaint qualifies for escalation.

Justified reasons for escalation **must signify** that we can achieve a different outcome at Stage Two, when assigning to a more senior officer, to re-evaluate the Stage One Process.

If approval is given to advance your complaint to the next stage of our process, you will receive a written acknowledgement from our Comments Team. If approval is not agreed, you will be notified accordingly, and your complaint will then be closed (**see section 12** – What happens if you are still not happy with the outcome)

The Comments Team will then appoint a Senior Investigating Manager, who has not had any previous involvement with your original complaint. The manager will re-examine the complaint details and correspondence to determine if:

- ✓ We have followed our complaints policy
- ✓ We have treated you fairly
- ✓ We have exhausted all our options at Stage One



- ✓ If there is anything else, we could do differently within the constraints of our company policies and practices

The Senior Investigating Officer will respond to you within 14 days of receipt of the Stage Two complaint.

### **Possible Outcomes**

Following an investigation and/or review, we will make one of the following decisions:

- ✓ Uphold the complaint and tell the customer how we will put things right
- ✓ Uphold part of the complaint
- ✓ Not uphold the complaint as we don't agree that something went wrong

## **9.4 Compensation**

In some circumstances following our investigations, if a customer has incurred additional expense as a result of inaction or service failure, we may offer reimbursement based on the loss of time, effort and energy to pursue your complaint to the value of approximately £50

## **9.5 Timescales for handling a complaint**

Stage	Acknowledgement	Response
Informal	Verbal or written on receipt	Verbal or written on receipt
Stage 1	2 Days	14 Days
Stage 2	2 Days	14 Days

## **9.6 Extending Timescales**

If at any stage within our complaints management process, your complaint requires more time to investigate, or we are unable to contact you within a reasonable period of time, we will inform you of this, using your preferred

method of communication, to let you know the reason for the delay and a date when you can expect to receive a response to your complaint.

## 9.7 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Definition
Receiving Officer	The member of staff who takes or receives the initial complaint from the customer. This role is usually carried out by the Customer Contact Centre
Comments Team	The Comments Team ensures that complaints are processed consistently with our policy and procedures
Investigating Officer	The Officer carries out the initial investigation and prepares a response for the customer. This role is usually carried out by a Manager from the relevant service area
Senior Investigating Officer	A case is escalated to a Senior Investigating by the Comments Team when a request for a review or escalation to stage two of our formal process has been received. This role is usually carried out by a Head of Service or Director

## 10. Unreasonable, Persistent or Vexatious Customers

Every effort will be made to resolve a complaint before a customer can be described as unreasonable, persistent and/or vexatious. A complainant who displays threatening or abusive behaviour or language (whether written or verbal), that causes staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused and/or continues to contact LCRCA with unreasonable demands following a complaint investigation, may be considered an unreasonable, persistent and/or vexatious or a persistent complainant.

Unreasonable demands can include seeking excessive amount of compensation, demanding an unrealistic service or seeking to prolong contact with the organisation by continually raising same/similar issues throughout an investigation.

New issues raised during an investigation will be treated either as part of the same investigation if that is appropriate or will be considered as a new complaint and dealt with accordingly.

Merseytravel or the LCRCA will make the decision regarding when a complainant is making unreasonable demands in conjunction with the relevant Head of Service, Human Resources, Legal and any other areas of the business deemed necessary. If action is taken to apply restricted access, we will write to the complainant explaining why the decision has been taken, how long any restrictions will last and how and when the decision will be reviewed.

Appropriate channels for managing the complainant will be agreed these can include but are not exhaustive of:

- ✓ Recording feedback, but not responding
- ✓ Applying a specified communication/correspondence channel
- ✓ Nominating a one point of contact within the organisation
- ✓ Seeking independent advice

## 11. Complaints or feedback received via social media

Where a complaint is made via social media, we will ask the complainant to direct message their name, address and a short description of the issue to allow us to manage the complaint with the individual concerned.

Complaints received via this channel will be logged and responded to within the same timescales as an informal complaint. Any positive feedback or suggestions received via this method will also be captured and recorded.

## 12. What happens if you are still not happy with the outcome?

You can contact the following organisations who may be able to look at your complaint. However, the Ombudsman will usually give LCRCA the opportunity to investigate first. They will endeavour to establish if an injustice has occurred and the complainant has been disadvantaged.

If your complaint relates to **Local Public Services** provided by your Council (the organisation to whom you pay your Council Tax) and/or the Combined Authority please contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman at [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk) or phone 0300 061 0614

If your complaint relates to a **Rail Services** please contact the Rail Ombudsman at [www.railombudsman.org](http://www.railombudsman.org) or phone 0300 094 0362

If your complaint relates to **Bus Services**, please contact Bus Users UK at [www.bususers.org](http://www.bususers.org) or phone 0300 111 000

***Complaints about Merseytravel have no further recourse to an external party***

### **13. Assurance**

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirement of the Data Protection Act

If a complaint is about a member of staff or operator, we will not reveal the customers identity, if you don't want us to. However, the nature of the complaint may make the customer identifiable.

If a complaint is made about a member of staff, we will not disclose details of any action that has been taken.

#### **Document Control**

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