

Complaints Policy

Buckinghamshire LEP aims to provide the best possible service for the benefit of the residents of Buckinghamshire.

Buckinghamshire LEP takes complaints very seriously. While we try to provide a good service, we know that sometimes things go wrong. We have developed a complaints procedure in response to this.

Buckinghamshire LEP will aim to sort out complaints quickly and fairly and we will try to sort out any mistake or misunderstanding straight away. Sometimes it may take longer, but we will tell you how long it will take.

Buckinghamshire LEP will keep records of all the complaints we receive and monitor them regularly. This helps us to:

- identify areas of service where we need to make changes and improvements; and
- make sure we are dealing with complaints effectively and consistently.

Buckinghamshire LEP's complaints policy has three stages:

- **Stage one** - The people who can best deal with a complaint are those who provide the service. You should speak or write to the member of the team that you have been dealing with and explain the reasons you are unhappy with the Buckinghamshire LEP. We can usually sort out mistakes and misunderstandings quickly and informally at this stage. We will acknowledge your complaint in three working days. We will investigate your complaint and we will respond within 10 working days. If we cannot do this, we will let you know when you can expect a reply. Our response will include details of who to complain to if you are not happy with the response at stage one.
- **Stage two** - If you are not happy with the response provided at stage one, you can complain to the Buckinghamshire LEP Chief Executive by emailing: Richard.harrington@BTVLEP.co.uk. It is best to let the Chief Executive know which parts of our response at stage one you are not happy with. We will investigate your complaint and respond to you within 15 working days. An investigation may take longer than this but if it does we will explain the reasons why and let you know when you can expect a full reply. In our response to your stage two complaint, we will provide contact details for the Buckinghamshire LEP Chairman – you will need to contact them if you are not happy with our response.
- **Stage three** - If you're still not happy, you can contact the Chairman. They are independent of the service you are complaining about and can carry out a full review of your complaint. It will help the investigation if you explain why you are not satisfied and what you expect from a further review. The Chairman's Office will reply within 20 working days. They will let you know if there are any delays.

We cannot investigate your complaint if it is something you knew about more than 12 months before contacting us for the first time. However, we may make an exception in some circumstances.

The above process covers the general complaints and enquiries procedure for the Buckinghamshire LEP. We have separate procedures for a number of areas as follows:

- Complaints in relation to specific funding programmes which you may be involved in will, generally, follow the same process as outlined above. However, there may be some differences

to this procedure, including the relevant evaluation panel reviewing your complaint and in these cases, if there are differences to the above procedure, the appropriate process for complaints will be notified in the relevant guidance document for the funding stream to which you are applying.

- Complaints or enquiries in relation to the Buckinghamshire LEPs accountable body (Buckinghamshire Council) will need to follow standard Council procedures. This will include enquiries such as Freedom of Information Requests.

Confidentiality

If a member of the public or a third party wants to make a confidential complaint or raise a concern, it will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made to protect the person's identity if they wish to remain anonymous. The LEP will investigate all complaints or allegations.

Anonymous Allegations

The LEP takes all complaints and concerns raised by members of the public and third parties seriously. We will investigate anonymous allegations but remind complainants that when people put their names to an allegation the ability to investigate and therefore reach firm conclusions is strengthened. Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the LEP. When exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised;
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

The Department of Communities and Local Government may request information arising from this process if they have concerns regarding a LEP or have been approached with similar complaints. The expectation is that this information will be provided on an anonymous basis, but it may be necessary to provide personal details to progress a complaint.

Where details are gathered, the LEP will put in place appropriate data protection arrangements in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Confidential Complaints Procedure

The LEP is aware that the organisation's ordinary complaints procedure may not be suitable if someone wants the complaint to remain confidential. If you would like to make a confidential complaint please write or email to: Richard Harrington, Buckinghamshire LEP Chief Executive Officer richard.harrington@BTVLEP.co.uk and or Ian Barham, Designated Complaints Officer ian@BTVLEP.co.uk.

State that you want the complaint to remain confidential.

The designated complaints officer will raise your concern and investigate the complaint. You can expect the officer to:

- Contact you within 10 working days to acknowledge the complaint and discuss the appropriate course of action.
- Write to you within 28 working days with findings of the investigation. If the investigation has not concluded within 28 working days, the officer will write to you to give reasons for the delay in resolving the complaint.

- Take the necessary steps to rectify the issue.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the complaint or the complaint involves those responsible for the confidential complaints procedure you can escalate your concerns through other organisations mentioned in the normal complaints procedure e.g. the LEP's Accountable Body Buckinghamshire Council. These organisations will have their own confidentiality procedures.

If you are either unable to raise the matter with the LEP or you are dissatisfied with the action taken you can report it direct to the Cities and Local Growth Unit in the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, at the following email address:

- LEPPolicy@communities.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to LEP Policy Deputy Director, Cities and Local Growth Unit, Fry Block, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF. You should clearly mark your email or letter as "Official - complaints".

