

STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE OF THE PROCEDURE

1.1 The Staffordshire Police Authority seeks to provide a high standard of service to the public for all matters which are within the roles, functions and responsibilities of the Authority. This Complaints Procedure has the following purposes:-

(a) To reassure the public that any reasonable complaint made about the Authority, or the performance or conduct of an officer of the Authority will be impartially and thoroughly investigated within an appropriate time;

(b) To ensure that Authority officers who are subject to a complaint have adequate rights and safeguards during the course of investigation and any subsequent disciplinary procedures (if appropriate); and

(c) To ensure that any investigation and conclusions comply with the requirements of natural justice, rules of evidence, human rights and equal opportunities.

2. HOW THE AUTHORITY DEALS WITH COMPLAINTS

2.1 The Authority will investigate your complaint if it concerns one of the following:

(i) If you are not satisfied about the level of service provided by the Authority or an officer of the Authority.

(ii) If there has been a breach of the Authority's Protocol on Member/Officer Relations by an officer.

2.2 If your complaint relates to a request you have made for access to information, the Authority will consider your complaint in accordance with its procedure for dealing with complaints as required under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

2.3 The following types of complaint are excluded from the procedure:

(i) Complaints which amount to a disagreement with a decision of the Authority or one of its Committees etc.

- (ii) A matter which is currently the subject of litigation or legal proceedings.
- (iii) Any complaint by officers concerning their terms and conditions of service.
- (iv) Malicious or vexatious complaints.
- (v) Repetitious complaints ie those which relate to the same circumstances as, or which are substantially similar to, complaints which have already been investigated.

3. MAKING A COMPLAINT

- 3.1 Complaints must be made in writing to the Chief Executive of the Staffordshire Police Authority, P.O. Box 3167, Stafford ST16 9JZ (or, if the complaint is against the Chief Executive himself), to the Chair of the Authority at the same address.

4. HOW THE AUTHORITY WILL INVESTIGATE YOUR COMPLAINT

Step 1 – Initial Discussion

- 4.1 All complaints received in writing will be considered initially by the Chief Executive. As complaints can often be resolved quickly through informal discussions, the Chief Executive, or an Authority officer appointed by him (but not an officer/officers who is/are the subject of the complaint(s)) may contact you to discuss your complaint with you. This is often a good way of resolving a complaint and if as a result of any discussions you are satisfied with the outcome, that will usually resolve the matter.

Step 2 – Further Investigation

- 4.2 If informal discussion has not in the particular circumstances been appropriate, or has failed to resolve your complaint, or if more detailed investigation of the complaint is necessary, then further investigation will be undertaken. Unless an immediate response can be provided, receipt of your complaint will be acknowledged in writing and you will be given an approximate timescale for a full reply.
- 4.3 The Authority would normally expect to complete any investigations and to provide a full response in writing within 20 working days of your complaint being received. However, where this timescale is not practicable, you will be contacted in writing advising why and when the Authority anticipates letting you have a full response.

Step 3 – If you are not satisfied with the outcome

- 4.4 In the event that you consider that your complaint has not been dealt with to your satisfaction, by the nominated officer on behalf of the Authority, your complaint will be forwarded to the Chief Executive for further consideration by him personally.

Step 4 – if you still remain dissatisfied

- 4.5 If, following a full response from the Chief Executive, you remain dissatisfied; you may write directly to the Chair of the Police Authority who will consider your complaint. The Chair of the Authority's decision on your complaint will be the final decision of the Authority on it.
- 4.6 Depending on the nature and substance of your complaint there may, however, be other avenues through which you can raise your complaint. You may for example be able to refer your complaint to one or more external regulatory bodies and details of those which may be relevant will be provided at the time the Authority's decision on your complaint is notified to you after Step 3 above.

5. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- 5.1 Complaints against the Chief Executive of the Authority will be referred to the Chair of the Authority.
- 5.2 All complaints will be considered by the Chair in the first instance. The Chair may then:
- (i) Respond to the complaint and report the decision to the next Standards Committee and the next Professional Standards Committee
 - (ii) If the complaint(s) raises any questions of discipline or conduct in connection with the Chief Executive, the Chair of the Authority will investigate the procedures or actions available to the Authority in the relevant circumstances and will notify the complainant as and when decisions thereon are taken by or on behalf of the Authority.

6. MAKING CONTACT

Staffordshire Police Authority, P.O. Box 3167, Stafford ST16 9JZ
Telephone: 01785 232242

Chair of the Police Authority – Mr. David Pearsall
(Address as above)

Chief Executive
(Address as above – Telephone 01785 276120)

7. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

- 7.1 The Authority's whistleblowing policy is an **Appendix** to this document.

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