



Policy Name	Complaints Resolution Process		
Frequency of Review	Every 24 months or in the event of legislation changes		
Revision History			
Date	Revision Number	Amendments	Reviewed by
6th September 2025	1.0	Adoption of new policy	Area Council

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that complaints raised from within La Leche League of Ireland or by the public are resolved fairly and promptly, with the goal of a respectful resolution.

This policy covers how to make a complaint about La Leche League of Ireland or any active Leader acting on their behalf. This policy runs in conjunction with the The La Leche League International Complaint Resolution Process. (<https://llli.org/llli-complaint-resolution-process/>)

The Term “Active Leader” refers to a Leader who has their primary connection with La Leche League of Ireland and is listed on the La Leche League International Database as a current Leader.

### **Definition of a complaint**

(Definition as per the Health Act 2004)

“Complaint” means a complaint made under this Part about any action of the Executive or a service provider that -

- (a) It is claimed, does not accord with fair or sound administrative practice, and
- (b) Adversely affects the person by whom or on whose behalf the complaint is made;

### **Who can make a complaint**

Any person who is being or has been provided with a service by La Leche League of Ireland or is seeking or has sought provision of such service may complain, in accordance with the procedures established under this procedure, about any action of La Leche League of Ireland that-

- (a) It is claimed, does not accord with fair and sound administrative practice, and
- (b) Adversely affects that person.



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### **How complaints can be made**

Local Complaints can be made by completing the complaint form which is linked on the La Leche League of Ireland website under the “complaints” page. If someone prefers to make a verbal complaint to a Leader, the Leader is requested to complete the complaint form for them on their behalf.

Jotform: <https://form.jotform.com/251945465112052>

For confidentiality purposes, this form will go directly to a Jotform database, which only the Complaints Officer and the Area Coordinator of Leaders (ACL) will have access to.

Members of the public may also use the La Leche League International Complaint Resolution Process (<https://llli.org/llli-complaint-resolution-process/>) to make a complaint at any level. The Executive Director (ED) of La Leche League International receives these complaints and refers them to the most appropriate place.

### **Complaints Officer**

La Leche League of Ireland will have the position of Complaints Officer.

La Leche League of Ireland will advertise this position internally to all Leaders, and nominations will be sought for the position.

Eligibility for this position:

- The person must be an active Leader in good standing with their primary connection in Ireland
- Have been a Leader for at least 12 months

If more than one person is nominated, then those nominated will be invited to send a short paragraph to Area Council on why they feel they would be good in the position. The members of Area Council will then vote on who they feel would fill the position best (one vote per AC member), with a two thirds majority required for appointment.

### **Complaint Review Committee**

This Committee will consist of:

- DC Coordinator - the term of office for inclusion on this committee will be in line with the DC Coordinators term of office. This person will act as Chairperson of this Committee.



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- ACL (or one of the CoACLs) - the term of office for inclusion on this committee will be in line with the ALCs term of office
- A Leader. Preference will be given to one who has held the position of DC coordinator or ACL in the past - the term of office for inclusion on this committee will be 3 years for this post. This post will be advertised internally to all Leaders, and nominations will be sought for the position. If more than one person is nominated, then those nominated will be invited to send a short paragraph to Area Council on why they feel they would be good in the position. The members of Area Council will then vote on who they feel would fill the position best (one vote per AC member), with a two thirds majority required for appointment.

### **Acknowledgement of complaints**

Complaints which fall under Stage 1 - "Point of contact resolution", will be responded to within 5 working days, and considered complete unless the complainant requests a different resolution.

Complaints which fall under Stage 2 - upon a complaint being received by or assigned to the complaints officer, they shall notify, within 5 working days, the complainant, in writing (via email or post), that the complaint has been so received or assigned and outline the steps that they propose to take in investigating the complaint and the time limits for the completion of the investigation of 45 days.

Complaints which fall under Stage 3 - upon a complaint being received by or assigned to the Complaints Review Committee, they shall notify, within 5 working days, the complainant, in writing (via email or post), that the complaint has been so received or assigned and outline the steps that they propose to take in investigating the complaint and the time limits for the completion of the investigation of 60 days.

Complaints which fall under Stage 4 - the time lines for these will be as per process for the relevant escalation ie. the Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children/La Leche League International

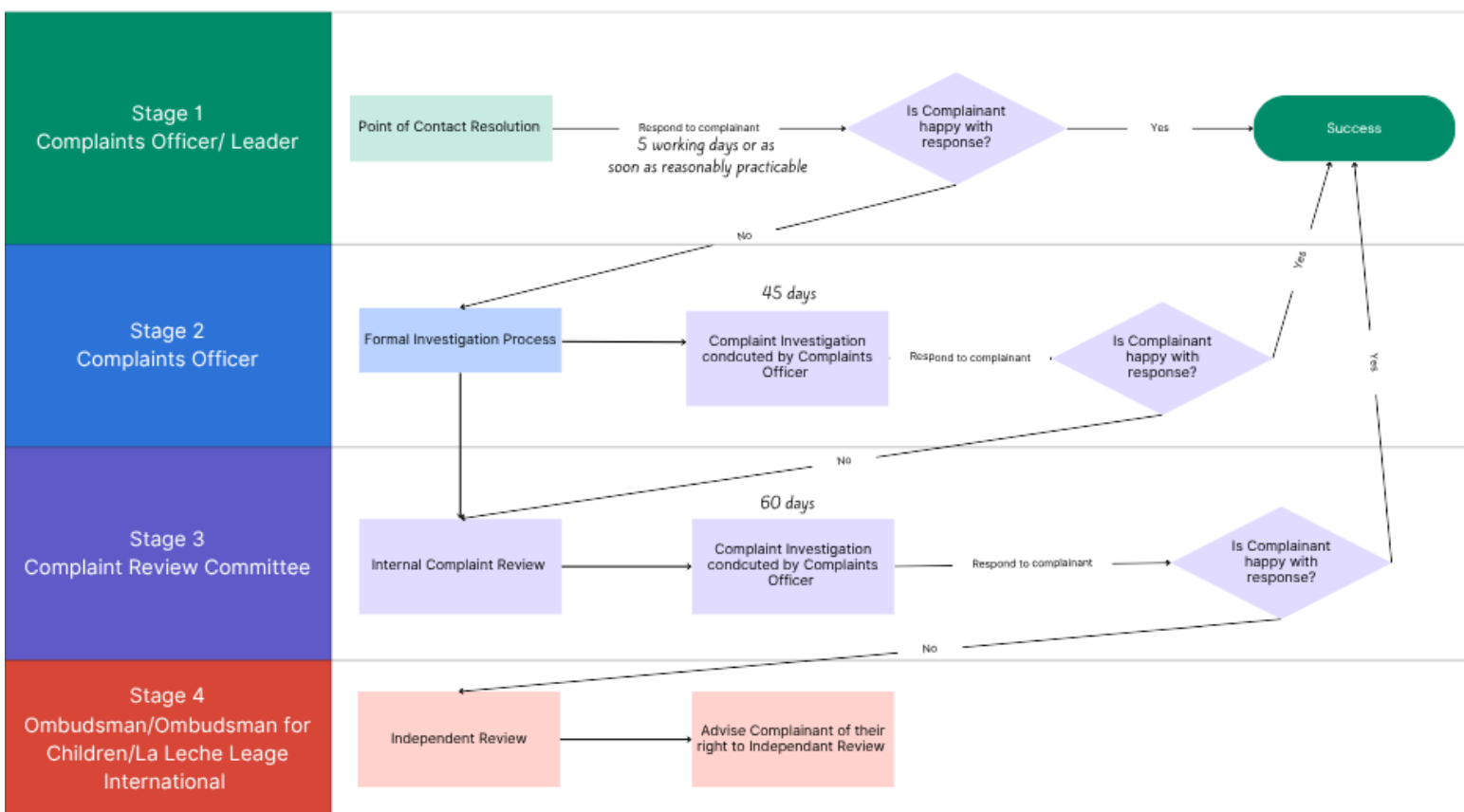
### **Advocacy**

All complainants have the right to appoint an advocate who, if a person is unable to make a complaint themselves, can assist them in making the complaint. Citizen Information defines advocacy as a means of empowering people by supporting them to assert their views and claim their entitlements where necessary, representing and negotiating on their behalf.



## Flowchart

# Complaints Resolution Process





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## **The Stages of the Complaints Management Process**

### **Stage 1**

#### Point of contact resolution

These are straightforward complaints which may be suitable for prompt management and to the service users satisfaction, within 5 working days of receipt.

Examples would be: request for a refund, negative feedback which does not require a corrective action, issues with the website not working correctly etc.

### **Stage 2**

#### Formal Investigation Process

Unresolved complaints at Stage 1 may need to be referred to a Complaints Officer. More serious or complex matters may need to be addressed immediately under Stage 2. There may be a need for investigation and action(s) as appropriate.

The Complaints Officer will acknowledge receipt of the request for referral to the complainant within 5 working days of receiving the request.

The Complaints Officer will consider whether it would be practicable, having regard to the nature and circumstances of the complaint, to seek the consent of the complainant and any other person to whom the complaint relates (eg. a named Leader) to find an informal resolution of the complaint by the parties concerned.

The timeline for investigation will be 45 days.

Where informal resolution was not successful or was deemed inappropriate, the Complaints Officer will initiate a formal investigation of the complaint.

The Complaints Officer is responsible for carrying out the formal investigation of the complaint at Stage 2 but may draw on appropriate expertise, skills etc. as required. Leaders are asked to participate and support the investigation of any complaint as requested.

At the end of the investigation, the Complaints Officer must write a report of their investigation and give a copy of the report to the complainant, to the Area Council, and to any Leader who was the subject of the complaint the section in the report which is relevant to them.

In circumstances where the 45 day limit will not be met, the Complaints Officer will inform the complainant in writing of this, and outline a new timeline for completion.



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The final report should include any recommendations needed to resolve the matter. The Complaints Officer will invite everyone involved to contact them with questions about any issues and will advise the complainant of their right to a review of the recommendations made by the Complaints Officer.

Where the investigation at Stage 2 fails to resolve the complaint, the complainant may seek a review of their complaint from the Complaint Review Committee at Stage 3 or the complainant may seek an independent review of their complaint from, for example, the Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children.

If it is not appropriate for the Complaints Officer to undertake the investigation of the complaint - for example if they themselves are the subject of the complaint, then the complaint can proceed directly to Stage 3 for review by the complaints committee.

#### **Implementation of Recommendations made by Complaints Officers**

- Within 45 days or whenever is reasonably practicable.

### **Stage 3**

#### **Review**

Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation at Stage 2, they can ask for the complaint to be referred for a review. A request for a review by the Complaint Review Committee must be made by the complainant within 30 days of the investigation report being sent to them from the Complaints Officer.

The Complaint Review Committee will acknowledge receipt of the request for review to the complainant within 5 working days of receiving the request.

The Review will be undertaken by the Complaint Review Committee. This Committee will consist of:

- DC Coordinator - the term of office for inclusion on this committee will be in line with the DC Coordinators term of office
- ACL (or one of the CoACLs) - the term of office for inclusion on this committee will be in line with the ALCs term of office
- A Leader who has held the position of DC coordinator or ACL in the past - the term of office for inclusion on this committee will be 3 years for this post.

Clear details as to whom a complainant may apply to for a complaint review should be outlined within the complaint letter being sent out by the Complaints Officer.

The complainant may also choose to go directly to the Office of the Ombudsman, Ombudsman for Children, or to request that the complaint is referred to the La Leche



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League International Complaint Resolution Team to whom the complainant could make an application for review.

**The Complaint Review Committees function is to:**

(i) To determine the appropriateness of a recommendation made by the Complaints Officer, having regard to these two elements:

(a) All aspects of the complaint

And

(b) The investigation of the complaint

(ii) Having determined the appropriateness of the recommendation to uphold it, vary it, or make a new recommendation if they consider it appropriate to do so.

The Complaint Review Committee will acknowledge receipt of the request for review to the complainant within 5 working days of receiving the request.

The Complaint Review Committee will have 60 days to review the complaint and reply back to the Complainant.

In circumstances where the 60 day limit will not be met, the Complaint Review Committee will inform the Complainant in writing of this, and outline a new timeline for completion.

**Implementation of Recommendations made by Complaint Review Committee**

- Within 60 days or whenever is reasonably practicable.

**Stage 4**

**Independent Review**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints management process, they may seek a review of the complaint by the La Leche League International Complaint Resolution Team. This may be done at any time by the complainant.



<b>Service User / Complainant Timeframes</b>	
To make a complaint	<b>12 months from date of having issue</b>
Withdraw complaint	<b>At any stage</b>
Request a review of a complaint by the Complaint Review Committee (Stage 3)	<b>Within 30 working days of the investigation report being sent to them from the Complaints Officer.</b>
Refer complaint for Independent Review (Stage 4)	<b>At any stage</b>
<b>Leaders</b>	
Respond to request for information	<b>10 working days or as soon as reasonably practicable</b>
<b>Complaint Timeframes</b>	
Point of Contact Resolution	<b>Within 5 working days or as soon as reasonably practicable</b>
Referral to Complaints officer for Stage 2	<b>Written confirmation of receipt of complaint within 5 working days of receipt</b>



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Investigation by the Complaints Officer	<b>45 days. Where this will not be met, the Complaints Officer will inform the complainant in writing of this, and outline a new timeline for completion.</b>
Implementation of Recommendations made by Complaints Officer	<b>Within 45 days or whenever is reasonably practicable</b>
Referral to Complaint Review Committee for Stage 3	<b>Written confirmation of receipt of referral of complaint within 5 working days of receipt</b>
Investigation by the Complaint Review Committee	<b>60 days. Where this will not be met, the Complaint Review Committee will inform the complainant in writing of this, and outline a new timeline for completion.</b>

### **Time limits for making a complaint**

The Complaints Officer must determine if the complaint meets the time frames as set out in Section 47, Part 9 of the Health Act 2004 which requires that:

- A complaint must be made within 12 months of the date of the action giving rise to the complaint or within 12 months of the complainant becoming aware of the action giving rise to the complaint.

A Complaints Officer may extend the time limit for making a complaint if in the opinion of the Complaints Officer special circumstances make it appropriate to do so. These special circumstances include but are not exclusive to the following:

- If the complainant is ill or bereaved
- If new relevant, significant and verifiable information relating to the action becomes available to the complainant
- If it is considered in the public interest to investigate the complaint
- If the complaint concerns an issue of such seriousness that it cannot be ignored
- Diminished capacity of the service user at the time of the experience e.g. mental health, critical/ long-term illness



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- Where extensive support was required to make the complaint and this took longer than 12 months

### **Principles Governing the Investigation Process**

The investigation will be conducted thoroughly and objectively with due respect for the rights of the complainant and the rights of Leaders to be treated in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

The Complaints Officer will have the necessary expertise to conduct an investigation impartially and expeditiously. Where appropriate, the Complaints Officer may request appropriately qualified persons to carry out clinical assessments, validation exercises etc.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation to the greatest extent consistent with the requirements of fair investigation.

A written record will be kept of all meetings and treated in the strictest confidence.

The Complaints Officer may interview any person who they feel can assist with the investigation.

La Leche League Leaders respond promptly to any investigations or complaints against Leaders and cooperate with conflict resolution processes as requested. (as per The La Leche League Code of Conduct item 2.5)

Leaders who participate in the investigation process will be required to respect the privacy of the parties involved by refraining from discussing the matter with other Leaders or persons outside the organisation.

### **Legal Action**

If a civil suit or governmental action that involves the subject matter of the complaint is filed by any external party against any party to the complaint, this Complaint Resolution Process is suspended until the legal action is concluded, abandoned, or otherwise resolved.

### **Matters Excluded**

A person is not entitled to make a complaint about any of the following matters:

- a matter that is or has been the subject of legal proceedings before a court or tribunal
- a matter that could prejudice an investigation being undertaken by the Garda Síochána;



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## **Refusal to investigate or further investigate complaints**

A complaints officer shall not investigate a complaint if—

- the person who made the complaint is not entitled to do so either on the person's own behalf or on behalf of another,
- the complaint is made after the expiry of the period specified or any extension of that period allowed under the exemptions listed in this document.

The Complaints Officer may decide not to investigate or further investigate an action to which a complaint relates if, after carrying out a preliminary investigation into the action or after proceeding to investigate such action, that officer—

(a) is of the opinion that—

1. the complaint does not disclose a ground of complaint
2. the subject-matter of the complaint is excluded as listed in this document
3. the subject-matter of the complaint is trivial, or
4. the complaint is vexatious or not made in good faith,

Or

(b) is satisfied that the complaint has been resolved.

The Complaints Officer shall, as soon as practicable after determining that they are prohibited from investigating a complaint or after deciding not to investigate or further investigate a complaint, inform the complainant in writing of the determination or decision and the reasons for it.

## **Managing Complainant Behaviour**

Where a complainant or complainants behaviour is deemed to be vexatious by the Complaints Officer, they may decide to not to investigate or further investigate a complaint. In these cases, the complaints officer will inform the complainant in writing of the determination or decision and the reasons for it. In these cases, the decision of the Complaints Officer will also be automatically referred to the Complaint Review Committee, who will make a determination as to whether to uphold this decision or not. The Complaint Review Committee will have 30 days from referral to make their decision, which will be sent to both the Complaints Officer and the Complainant in writing. If the decision is not upheld, the Complaint Review Committee will then undertake a review of the complaint, as in Stage 3 outlined above.



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It is noted that in a minority of cases where the organisation will take all reasonable measures to try to resolve a complaint through the complaints procedure, the complainant does not accept these efforts. Where a complainant's behaviour could be considered abusive, unreasonable or vexatious, La Leche League will follow their policy for Dealing with Vexatious Complaints.

## **Redress**

Redress should be consistent and fair for both the complainant and the service against which the complaint was made. La Leche League of Ireland should offer forms of redress or responses that are appropriate and reasonable where it has been established that a measurable loss, detriment or disadvantage was suffered or sustained by the claimant personally. This redress could include:

- Apology
- An explanation
- Refund
- Admission of fault
- Change of decision
- Replacement
- Repair /rework
- Correction of misleading or incorrect records
- Recommendation to make a change to a relevant policy
- A waiver of debt

## **Frequency of Review**

This Policy will be reviewed every 24 months.