

# **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

## **AREAS OF APPLICABILITY**

All activities of the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership (ALCRP).

## **EXAMPLES OF APPLICABILITY TO ABBEY LINE CRP ACTIVITIES**

Some examples of activities that this policy is applicable to are listed below, but it should be noted that there will be other activities covered by the policy:

- Activities on stations or trains
- Activities at external events
- Governance of ALCRP

## **POLICY**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Complaints Checklist
- Equal Opportunities Policy

ALCRP aims to provide its members, organisations and individuals with the best possible service and interactions.

We positively welcome suggestions you may have for improvement.

Usually, a word with the person at the point of service delivery or other interaction will suffice should a problem arise. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be occasions when users of our services feel that the quality or level of service provided fall short of what they could reasonably expect.

We also want to know about these occasions so that we can make good the problem and plan to avoid its repetition.

If you have a complaint, we would like you to tell us about it.

### **Definitions**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action, by ALCRP or its members and associated personnel.

It is a criticism that expects a reply and would like things to be changed. Complaints could include the following (which is not an exhaustive list):

- Concern from someone we work with about the quality of a project delivery

- Concern from a member of the public or supporter about a particular approach or action
- Concern about the behaviour of members or associated personnel

A complaint has to be about some action for which ALCRP is responsible or is within our sphere of influence.

A complaint is not:

- A general inquiry about ALCRP's work
- A request for information
- A contractual dispute
- A request to amend records e.g. to correct an address

The complaints procedures do not apply to complaints that are subject to current investigation by any regulatory body or other legal or official authorities. Such issues will be dealt with by the relevant regulatory body.

### **Who is not covered by this policy?**

Complaints by staff are governed by Hertfordshire County Council's procedures for dealing with problems in the workplace. Complaints relating to serious incidents such as fraud and corruption or safeguarding concerns will be dealt with through the relevant policy and procedures.

## **PROCEDURES**

It is hoped that most complaints or concerns about ALCRP's work or behaviour can and will be dealt with informally by members or volunteers at a local level. However, it is recognised that not all issues can be resolved in this way and that a formal complaints mechanism is required for those occasions when an individual or organisation wishes to make their complaint a matter of record and to receive a formal response.

### **How to make a complaint**

1. If you have a complaint to make, it should be made to the ALCRP steering group member concerned who will try to resolve the issue informally.
2. If the issue is serious, or you are not satisfied after raising it with the member concerned, you should make a formal complaint.
3. Your complaint should be made in writing, marked "Private & Confidential", and sent to the CRP Officer who will acknowledge it in writing (normally within 7 days of receipt). Remember to keep a copy of your letter.
4. The CRP Officer will appoint a member to investigate the complaint. (See separate check list).
5. The member shall communicate the results of the investigation to you within a reasonable time - normally 21 days.

6. You have the right - if dissatisfied with the results of the inquiry - to put your case in writing to the CRP Officer. The Officer shall - in consultation with the Chair of the Steering Group - investigate the complaint and will communicate the results of the investigation to you within a reasonable time - normally 14 days.
7. You have the right - if dissatisfied with the Officer's response - to put your case in writing or personally to a panel comprising at least three members from ALCRP's steering group. If attending personally, you have the right to be accompanied by a friend or advocate to help put your case. (The panel also has the right to have an advisor present).
8. In the event of the complaint being about the CRP Officer, the complaint should be made in writing addressed to the Chair of the Steering Group c/o Hertfordshire County Council who will acknowledge it in writing (normally within 7 days of receipt). Remember to keep a copy of your letter.
9. The Chair will appoint a steering group member to investigate the complaint. (See separate check list).
10. The steering group member shall communicate the results of the investigation to you within a reasonable time - normally 21 days.
11. You have the right - if dissatisfied with the steering group member's response – to appeal to the Chair who will convene a panel of members from ALCRP's steering group. If attending personally, you have the right to be accompanied by a friend or advocate to help put your case. (The panel also has the right to have an advisor present).
12. The decision of the panel will be final.
13. Where appropriate, ALCRP will make a written apology to the complainant, and agree any further action necessary to make good the cause of the complaint.
14. All formal complaints and the response made to them will be recorded and filed in a secure place.
15. The steering group shall be informed by the Officer at the first available meeting of the number and nature of any formal complaints and their outcome, and consideration will be given to the implications these have for the planning and management of future services annually.

ALCRP's complaints procedure will be publicised to organisations and individuals who use its services.

**DATE OF ADOPTION: 18/02/2026**

**REVIEW DATE: May 2027**

## COMPLAINTS CHECKLIST

Use this checklist when investigating a complaint as part of the organisations complaints policy and procedure.

Staff Name: ..... Date: .....

Complainants Name: .....

Have you conveyed verbally to the complainant the investigation procedure and timescale?	YES/NO
Have you conducted an interview to establish background to and detail of the complaint?	YES/NO
Have you written a statement about the complaint which you have dated and signed?	YES/NO
Has the complainant countersigned as correct the statement you have taken?	YES/NO
Have you given a copy of the complaint to those associated with its contents?	YES/NO
Have you asked, in writing, for a statement from those associated with the complaint within an agreed period of time?	YES/NO
Have you received the statements within the agreed time period?	YES/NO
Have you advised those being interviewed that they can have a representative or friend with them?	YES/NO
Have you interviewed all those associated with the complaint?	YES/NO
Have you written up, signed, and dated your notes from each of these interviews?	YES/NO
Have you reviewed all the evidence placed before you?	YES/NO
Have you assessed whether or not you feel there are grounds for complaint?	YES/NO
If so, have you considered all the options for action that could/should be taken as a result?	YES/NO
Are you clear in your own mind what will be the content of the discussion with the Chair of the Steering Group about this investigation and its findings?	YES/NO
Have you discussed fully with the Chair of the Steering Group the findings of your investigation and your recommendations for action?	YES/NO
Have you put these formally in writing to the Chair of the Steering Group, together with the statements and notes taken during the course of the investigation?	YES/NO