



Customer Complaints Policy

1. Policy Statement

Léargas is open to feedback both positive and negative. We are committed to taking seriously any complaint that members of the public have about our activities and equally, we welcome suggestions and observations that can lead to learning and improvements.

Léargas has outlined the standards we are committed to in our [Quality Customer Charter](#). We encourage anyone with feedback or complaints about our organisation or services to contact us. Léargas is committed to:

- taking all feedback and complaints seriously and investigating them proportionately and appropriately.
- ensuring that staff are aware of the Feedback and Complaints Policy and are clear about their responsibilities when handling, resolving, and reporting complaints.
- recognising when a mistake has been made, explaining what has happened and taking action to remedy situations wherever practical.
- drawing upon customer complaints and feedback to identify how we can improve our services.

We will provide adequate and appropriate resources to implement this policy and will ensure it is communicated and understood.

2. Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure that all complaints are taken seriously and addressed in an appropriate and professional manner. It outlines steps in submitting and recording of complaints.

3. Scope

This policy covers all actions to be taken with respect to a complaint by a member of the public. Complaints can be made against any aspect of Léargas services and activities.

4. Glossary

NA – National Agency

ED – Executive Director

ETD Team – Education and Training Development Team

YSE Team – Youth, Sport and European Solidarity Corps Development Team

PFO Team – Programme Finance and Operations

DFHERIS – Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Skills

DoE – Department of Education

DCEDIY – Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

E+ - Erasmus+ Programme

ESC – European Solidarity Corps Programme

Programmes: Refers to both the Erasmus+ programme and the European Solidarity Corps, abbreviated to 'E+' and 'ESC' below.



Projects: Refers to eTwinning, EPALÉ, Eurodesk, Youth Wiki, Languages and CASE.

Feedback: Léargas defines feedback as giving us your opinion or thoughts about your experience of our service or activities. It can be positive or negative and is usually given informally and with the intention to help improve something. Feedback does not always require a response or action but does require acknowledgement.

Complaint: Léargas defines a complaint as 'Dissatisfaction with the service a complainant received from Léargas or from an organisation that has benefitted from our programmes/projects'.

Service Complaints are defined as those where the complaint is specifically related to **services or activities** provided by Léargas and our staff.

Project Complaints are defined as those where the complaint is specifically related to an organisation that has benefitted from our programmes/projects. In these cases, the complainant is advised to exhaust that organisation's internal procedures before submitting a complaint to Léargas. All Project Complaints must be made via the Formal Complaints process as outlined later in this policy.

It should be noted that Léargas is required by the European Commission and other authorities to apply a range of monitoring and audit processes for all programme and project beneficiaries. These will be applied to all feedback/complaints before a decision is made about further investigation.

Complainant: A person who is submitting a formal complaint on behalf of themselves or an organisation.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Léargas Management is responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff are aware of this policy and can advise on same.
- Ensuring that all complaints received are handled in line with this policy.
- Regularly monitoring the number, nature and outcome of complaints.
- Appointing a Complaints Liaison Officer to fulfil the duties outlined in this procedure.
- Ensuring that the Feedback and Complaints Policy information is readily available to members of the public such as being easy to find and read on the website.

Léargas Staff, are responsible for:

- Pointing members of the public to the Feedback and Complaints Policy as required.
- Assisting them to make a complaint as outlined in this policy.
- Following all other steps regarding complaints as outlined in this policy.

6. Feedback & Complaint Management

Most problems can be resolved initially by contacting a member of staff or member of Léargas management. If then the complainant believes that the issue has not been resolved to their satisfaction, they can make a formal written complaint.



When feedback or a complaint is received, we will:

- Acknowledge the feedback/complaint within 3 working days.
- Aim to deal with feedback/complaint within 10 working days. This period may be extended in certain circumstances.
- Investigate the feedback/complaint in a fair and appropriate manner.
- Consider all feedback and complaints with a view to learning and improving.
- Treat the feedback/complaint in confidence unless consent is provided or otherwise stated (and subject to our obligations under the relevant FOI & GDPR and data protection acts).

Complaints may be made in any form - over the phone, email, letter etc. All complaints made to Léargas staff, whether verbally or in writing, must be taken seriously.

Dealing with complaints requires Léargas staff to exercise judgement and common sense. It also requires a courteous response to the complainant.

If the complaint is about an organisation that has benefitted from our programmes/projects, then the complainant is advised to exhaust that organisation's procedures before submitting a complaint to Léargas.

If the complainant wishes to proceed with a complaint having exhausted internal options available to them, then this is a *Project Complaint* and must be submitted as per the Formal Complaints process outlined in this document.

Unreasonable complainant behaviour will not be tolerated, such as if the complainant is aggressive, threatening, or makes excessive demands from staff. Unreasonable complainant behaviour includes unreasonable persistence, unreasonable demands, unreasonable lack of cooperation, unreasonable arguments, threats, intimidation, or abuse. Staff will record such behaviour.

Informal Complaint

An informal complaint is usually negative feedback about service or support experience. This type of feedback is usually communicated directly to a staff member, so if it is possible for Léargas to resolve the complaint immediately and informally.

Staff guidance in managing an informal complaint:

- Refer informal feedback or complaint to your manager.
- With the appointed Complaints Liaison Officer and your manager, assess the steps required for this feedback or complaint on a case-by-case basis.
- Respond to the complainant as appropriate.
- Once resolved, identify learnings to limit future complaints or issues.

Formal Complaint

In cases where a complaint about Léargas cannot be resolved informally, the staff member directs the complainant to Léargas Feedback & Complaints Policy and the Feedback and Complaints Form.



Where a complaint about a funded organisation cannot be resolved using that organisation's own internal complaint procedure, then a complaint can be submitted to Léargas.

Members of the public can be directed to the Léargas website page: www.leargas.ie/complaints.

How to handle a formal complaint:

- The complainant should download the Complaint form from the website and submit to complaints@leargas.ie
- The relevant manager is informed as soon as the formal complaint is received.
- Feedback and complaints are documented and managed internally. A new folder is created for each complaint.
- The Feedback and Complaints Register is updated, and the complaint assigned an internal reference number.
- Internal communications/emails/documents relating to the complaint/complainant must not contain any personal or identifiable information, only the internal reference number.
- Léargas will issue an acknowledgement to the complainant within 3 working days indicating:
 - Receipt of complaint.
 - A proposed timeframe for reverting to the complainant.
 - A contact person for the complainant.
- The submitted form is directed to the relevant manager who, with staff will:
 - Designate a Complaints Liaison Officer to assess, investigate and take steps to resolve the issue.
 - Ensure the assessment of the complaint is finalised and a response issued from complaints@leargas.ie to the complainant within 10 working days. Léargas reserves the right to extend the response period(s) due to complexity of the issue and/or staff availability.

7. Confidentiality & Anonymous Complaints

Léargas commits to treating all informal and formal feedback/complaints in strict confidence unless consent is provided or otherwise stated (and subject to our obligations under the relevant FOI, GDPR and data protection acts).

If an anonymous complaint is received, Léargas will note the issues raised and, where possible try and resolve them appropriately.

8. Monitoring and Reporting on Feedback & Complaints

Léargas will review this policy statement regularly to reflect new legal and regulatory requirements and to ensure good practice.

Monitoring Feedback and Complaints will be ongoing as part of the Risk Register and reviews at the Management and board level. Particular attention will be given to:

- The total number and nature formal complaints made in a 12-month period.
- Learning outcomes implemented because of the above.



9. Related Documents

Protected Disclosures Policy 2023	
Feedback & Complaint Form	
Feedback and complaint Register	