

Big Lottery Fund

Making a complaint



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We care about the environment The Big Lottery Fund seeks to minimise its negative environmental impact and only uses proper sustainable resources

Our equal opportunities commitment The Big Lottery Fund is committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality of opportunity, both as a grant maker and employer. The Big Lottery Fund will aim to adopt an inclusive approach to ensure grant applications and recipients, stakeholders, job applicants and employees are treated fairly. It is the responsibility of all staff Board members to uphold and implement our equality policy

Big Lottery Fund is the joint operating name of the New Opportunities Fund and the National Lottery Charities Board (which made grants under the name of Community Fund).



Introduction

If you want to make a complaint, we have a procedure for you to use. This leaflet explains the procedure. All UK-wide and England lottery distributors use this procedure. Making a complaint will not affect in any way the level of service you receive from us, for example if your complaint is with regard to a funding application your chances of getting a grant from us in the future will not be compromised.

What can I complain about?

You can complain if you think that:

- 'maladministration' has taken place (for example, if we have delayed, made mistakes in or failed to follow the procedures in our application process)
- we have failed to give you access to information or have given you incorrect advice or information
- we have not treated you politely
- we have discriminated against you or not treated you fairly.

If your complaint is concerning a funding application, we can only look at your application again if:

- we discover (through dealing with a complaint) that we did not follow the published procedures for assessing your application
- you can show that we have misunderstood a significant part of your application
- you can show that we did not take notice of relevant information.

You may not be sure what information you should include or how best to set out your complaint. You should set out the facts as clearly as possible, in a logical order. Remember to include important details and dates where possible. We

What can I complain about?

can give you information about how we will process your complaint. Our contact details are given in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this document.

If you need any help, you can contact your local citizens advice bureau (their contact details are in the phone book or at www.citizensadvice.org.uk).

We will keep all complaints confidential. If you make a complaint, we will treat you with respect, and we expect you to treat our staff in the same way.

What you cannot complain about

You may be disappointed if we turn down your application for funding, but you cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against our decision on giving a grant if we have followed our decision-making process correctly.

You cannot complain about our published policies or any government policy. If you have any comments about our policies, send these to our deputy director of policy.

Do not use this complaints procedure to make a complaint about any fraud you think has taken place. You should report this to our internal audit department or the police.

How do I make a complaint?

Stage one

If you are not happy with the service you have received, contact the office you first dealt with. They will try to put things right. We hope that we can settle complaints as quickly as possible in this way.

Stage two

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you can take this further by:

- writing to our customer care and quality adviser who will arrange for the Chief Executive to reply
- sending an audio tape or CD to them.

Please tell us:

- what happened
- when it happened
- who dealt with you
- what you would like us to do to put things right.

Also tell us if there is anything we need to know about how to contact you (for example, if you would like us to reply by textphone or on audio tape).

You must do this within four weeks of receiving our response to stage one.

How do I make a complaint?

If you cannot make your complaint in writing, please contact the customer care and quality adviser on 020 7211 3700.

When will I hear from you?

Within three working days of receiving your complaint we will write to or phone you to say that we have received it. We will also tell you how you can contact the person who is dealing with your complaint and when you can expect a reply.

You will receive a reply to your complaint within 10 working days. If we cannot give a full reply in this time, we will tell you why and when you are likely to receive it.

If your complaint is about the way we have used our powers to make, refuse or manage funding, you can then move onto Stage three. If your complaint is about the way we conduct any other aspect of our business we will let you know of possible alternatives that may be open to you. We will tell you in our response to Stage 2 whether Stage 3 is open to you.

Stage three

If you are not satisfied with the Chief Executive's reply, you can refer your complaint to the independent complaints reviewer (ICR).

How do I make a complaint?

The ICR is unbiased and hears both sides of the complaint.

The ICR is not part of our organisation and their investigations and recommendations are independent. You can ask the ICR to look at your complaint, or our Chief Executive can ask them to do this. There is no charge for using the ICR. The Office of the Independent Complaints Reviewer will contact you within five working days of receipt of your complaint.

The ICR has the power to decide whether or not to investigate a complaint, and he or she will explain their reasons if they decide not to investigate it.

If the ICR investigates your complaint and finds that it is justified, he or she will recommend ways for us to put things right, and how to prevent a similar situation in future. The ICR will report within three months, and usually more quickly. We will normally make any changes the ICR recommends to our current procedures as quickly as possible.

The ICR cannot consider complaints that have not gone through the procedure set out in this document. If you want the ICR to consider your complaint, you must write to them, or send them an audio tape or CD, within four weeks of receiving our Chief Executive's reply.

How do I make a complaint?

The ICR cannot reverse funding decisions or make comments or changes to our legal responsibilities and policies on awarding grants.

To contact the ICR see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this leaflet.

Other ways to make a complaint

The Parliamentary Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (known as the Parliamentary Ombudsman) investigates complaints by members of the public who have suffered injustice because of maladministration by public organisations. The Parliamentary Ombudsman also looks at complaints about being refused access to official information.

By law, the Ombudsman is independent of the Government and the civil service, and has wide powers to investigate.

The Ombudsman does not normally investigate complaints if they have not been through our complaints procedures first.

The Ombudsman's services are free.

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman – see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this leaflet.

Judicial review

A judicial review is where a judge examines your complaint to see whether we have behaved illegally. The judge cannot rule that we must change a funding decision, but they can ask us to reconsider our decision.

Other ways to make a complaint

Freedom of information

Our publication scheme gives details of what information we make available to the public as a matter of course. We will extend the range of this list in the future, whenever it is possible for us to do so.

If you want information that we do not include in our publication scheme, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you the right to ask us for it. Under the Act, we must provide you with the information you ask for unless it is not covered by the Act (that is, it is 'exempt'). If the information you want is exempt, we have to tell you why.

If you do not agree with us, you should follow stages one and two of the procedures set out in this document. If you are still not satisfied, you may ask the Information Commissioner to review our decision.

You can get copies of our freedom of information policy and our publication scheme by visiting <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/foi.htm> or phoning our corporate governance manager on 020 7211 3736.

To contact the Information Commissioner, see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this document.

Further information

Your personal information

If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint. We may also give your personal information to other people and organisations if we have to do so by law or if you have given us permission.

Equal opportunities

We are committed to equal opportunities and take complaints about discrimination seriously. We may use complaints about discrimination to review our policies and procedures. This is to make sure we treat everyone equally.

We may record information about the ethnic background, sex, disability and community background of everyone who makes a complaint so that we promote and maintain our equal opportunities commitment. We will keep all information confidential.

Comments and suggestions

We welcome comments and suggestions as these can help us improve our services. Please send any comments or suggestions to our customer care and quality adviser. The contact details are given in 'Getting in touch' at the end of this document.

Getting in touch

To complain about the service you have received from us, please contact the office you initially dealt with. If you no longer have their contact details then please contact our **customer care and quality adviser** at the address below, telephone 020 7211 3700 or email customer.services@biglotteryfund.org.uk

If you are not happy with the response to your initial complaint, have any questions about our complaint process or any other comments about our service then please contact our **customer care and quality adviser**.

To find out about our freedom of information policy or publication scheme, please contact our **corporate governance manager** at the address below, telephone 020 7211 3736 or email freedomofinformation@biglotteryfund.org.uk

To comment on our policies please contact our **deputy director of policy** at the address below.

To report a possible fraud, please contact our **head of internal audit** at the address below.

Big Lottery Fund

1 Plough Place
London EC4A 1DE

Fax: 020 7211 1753

Textphone: 0845 039 0204

Getting in touch

If you want to comment on any government policy on Lottery distribution, contact:

Public Enquiry Service

Department for Culture, Media and Sport
2–4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH

Website: www.culture.gov.uk

Phone: 020 7211 6000 (general enquiries)

Email: enquiries@culture.gsi.gov.uk

Other contacts

Independent Complaints Reviewer

c/o Lottery Forum
PO BOX 52727
London EC4P 4WW

Phone: 020 7211 3823

Textphone: 0845 039 0204

Getting in touch

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman from:

Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration

Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP

Helpline: 0845 015 4033

Phone: 020 7217 4163

Fax: 020 7217 4000

Textphone: 020 7217 4066

Email: opca.enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.uk

The Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Phone: 01625 545 700

Fax: 01625 524 510

Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

