



**AGRI-FOOD
& BIOSCIENCES
INSTITUTE**

Complaints Policy
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afbi



AFBI COMPLAINTS POLICY

Our Commitment

AFBI is committed to providing our customers with high quality standards of service. We welcome your comments on the quality of service you received and your suggestions on how we can improve our service.

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Complaints

Please tell us if you are unhappy with the quality of our service. We will look at your complaint in a positive way, dealing with it as quickly as possible. We will fully and fairly investigate your complaint, keep you informed of progress, offer a full explanation of the circumstances and take appropriate action. We also want to know how we can put things right. We therefore want to learn from our mistakes so that we can improve the quality of the service we provide to you.

How you can make a complaint

You can make a complaint in person, by letter, by e-mail or by telephone. It is important when contacting us, that you provide as much information as possible. This will assist us in investigating your complaint quickly and efficiently.

The Procedure we will follow

We will deal with complaints in the following way:

Stage 1

Initial complaint

The first thing you should do is contact the officer with whom you were dealing or the local manager and give them details of your complaint. They are best placed to deal with your complaint quickly. You will find contact details on most correspondence issued, or on the AFBI website www.afbini.gov.uk. Alternatively, phone 028 9025 5636 to be directed to the most appropriate member of staff.

Stage 2

Your complaint has been investigated but you are still not satisfied. If you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint, you can refer the matter to a senior manager (Head of Division) who has not previously been involved in the matter and who will investigate your complaint. We will give you their name and address in our response to your initial complaint.

Stage 3

Still not satisfied, what can I do? If you feel that the senior manager has not responded to your complaint satisfactorily, you can write to the Chief Executive

who will oversee a further investigation of your complaint. They will be assisted in this by a panel including a person independent from the relevant Division. This will be a final reply to your complaint.

There may be times a complaint enters AFBI and it is decided it has been escalated to stage 2 or 3 and therefore will not be processed from stage 1.

How quickly will we deal with your complaint?

At each step of the process we will endeavour to:

- Acknowledge all written complaints within 3 working days of receipt; and
- Provide a full response to both verbal and written complaints within 15 working days of receipt.
- If it is not possible to provide a full response to you within 15 working days we will let you know why and tell you when you can expect a full response.

If we are responsible:

- Although we do everything we can to get things right, occasionally we may get things wrong. If this happens, we will:
- Explain what has gone wrong;
- Apologise for our mistake;
- Take appropriate action to put things right.

How to Contact Us

	Tel: 028 9025 5636		Email: info@afbini.gov.uk
	Secretariat Unit Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute AFBI Headquarters 18a Newforge Lane Belfast BT9 5PX		Or visit our website: www.afbini.gov.uk

What to do if you are still not satisfied

If you have received a final reply from the Chief Executive and you remain unhappy, you can contact The Northern Ireland Ombudsman. The Ombudsman provides a free service and is totally independent of the Government. The Ombudsman has wide legal powers that enables investigation of complaints against Government Departments and their Agencies. Usually the Ombudsman will expect you to have used our complaints procedure before your case can be considered for investigation.

You can contact the Ombudsman as follows:

	Tel: 028 9023 3821 or Free phone: 0800 343424		Email: ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk
	The Ombudsman Freepost RTKS-BAJU- ALEZ Belfast BT1 6BR		Or visit our website: www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk