

Our Complaints Procedure

Our Commitment

We are an organisation 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.

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 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.

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. The reply you receive from the senior manager will tell you whom to contact.

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.

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 NI Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman provides a free service and is totally independent of the Government. He has wide legal powers that enable him to investigate complaints against Government Departments and their Agencies.

Usually the Ombudsman will expect you to have used our complaints procedure before he will consider your case.

You can contact the Ombudsman

In writing to:

The Ombudsman,
Freepost RTKS-BAJU-ALEZ,
Belfast, BT1 6BR

By calling at:

The Ombudsman's Office,
33 Wellington Place,
Belfast, BT1 6HN
9:30am – 4pm

By telephone: 028 9023 3821 or
Free phone: 0800 343424

By text-phone: 028 9089 7789

By e-mail:

ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk

Or by visiting their website on

www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk

Contact Details

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
Corporate Communications
AFBI Headquarters
18a Newforge Lane
Malone Upper
Belfast
BT9 5PX

Tel: 028 9025 5636

Email: info@afbini.gov.uk

Or visit our website:

www.afbini.gov.uk

What to do if you have a complaint

Please tell us about it:

Stage 1



Contact the officer with whom you were dealing with or the local manager

Stage 2



If you are not happy with their response write to the Head of Division responsible

Stage 3



If you are still not happy write to the Chief Executive of AFBI

If you have received a final reply and you remain unhappy, you can refer your complaint to The NI Ombudsman.