

Q2e: Please consider each element of the draft MCHP outlined below and comment on any changes or additions.

All complaints escalated to stage 2 ‘investigation’ should be acknowledged within 3 working days

HEALTH SECTOR

Organisation name	Response
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service	We agree that complaints should be acknowledged within a short timeframe, but believe this should be from receipt of the complaint, not as suggested, for only those complaints escalated to stage 2. Indeed our current procedure ensures all complaints are acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt.
Southern Health & Social Care Trust – email submission	No response to question.
Southern Health & Social Care Trust – online submission	No response to question.
Health & Social Care Board	No response to question.
NHS	No
Woodbrooke Medical Practice	No response to question.
HSC Trust Complaints Forum	Currently the HSC Complaints Procedure has 2 working days for HSC Trusts, which is acceptable, but we have no particular issue with this changing to 3. However, the count of working days should start at Day 0 as day of receipt. For example, if I received a complaint on Monday, and used the draft model definition of 3 working days, I would have to acknowledge by Wednesday, which is actually only 2 days later (i.e. 48 hours later). Current database systems used in HSC are set up as Day 0 being the day of receipt.
Patient Client Council	This approach is welcomed.
General Medical Council	No response to question.
Medical Protection Society	MPS agrees with this proposal as this is already a feature of the HSC Complaints Procedure [paragraph 3.18 refers].

CHASNI	Seems a very quick turnaround. I'd be worried you cannot keep up to this, especially if you see an increase in the number of complaints you're handling. be careful you don't become another organisations that lets people down.
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	No response to question.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Organisation name	Response
Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)	No response to question.
Spires Integrated Primary School	No response to question.
Belfast Metropolitan College	Disagree. 3 working days is very tight. If a complaint is received at 5pm on a working day but not picked up until the following day, we would have lost a working day already. If staff were off sick or on leave, the timeframe may be missed. Our joint sector policy currently stipulates a 5 working day acknowledgement timeframe and this works well.
South West Regional College	SWC disagrees. 3 working days is very tight. If a complaint is received at 5pm on a working day but not picked up until the following day, we would have lost a working day already. If staff were off sick or on leave, the timeframe may be missed. Our joint sector policy currently stipulates a 5 working day acknowledgement timeframe and this works well.
Northern Regional College	Disagree. 3 working days is very tight. If a complaint is received at 5pm on a working day but not picked up until the following day, we would have lost a working day already. If staff were off sick or on leave, the timeframe may be missed. Our joint sector policy currently stipulates a 5 working day acknowledgement timeframe and this works well.
Education Authority - School Development Service	In some school contexts this may be difficult to achieve. Some schools have 3/4 members of staff so they may struggle to meet this timeframe given the full-time contact with pupils on a daily basis. In larger schools, the majority of staff have a full-time teaching commitment and this short timeframe may be unrealistic. 10 days or asap might be more realistic, currently EA has asap in our model schools' procedure – this allows for flexibility whilst giving the clear message that the expectation is that the response is made efficiently.
Education Authority - Corporate Complaints Service	The EA Corporate Complaints Service have recently changed from a three stage process to a two stage process. Our revised guidance states that a Stage 2 response will be issued within 25 working days and a complaint will be acknowledged with 5 working days upon receipt. The service is currently trying to develop a culture of effective complaints management across the Authority with significant changes recently having taken place to include the recent implementation of a new two stage process; a new Complaints Management System; an online form for frontline staff to automatically upload important complaint data and mandatory complaint handling training. It is believed that given the significant changes which have recently taken place that 5 working days is a more appropriate time period for Stage 2 complaints to be acknowledged within than the proposed 3 working days. This allows staff more time to consider the complaint in detail, speak to staff in relevant services

	about the complaint and if applicable to include an accurate summary of the points of complaint and the outcome sought in the acknowledgement.
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	This is very tight...
Northern Ireland National Association for Head Teachers	A new complaints procedure administered by DE must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadlines should be realistic and achievable and school leaders should be consulted on these in advance of them being set.
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	This is impractical in schools around a holiday period. Even in term-time this should be more than 3 days.
NI Teachers Collaborate	Disagree – 3 working days is very tight. If a complaint is received at 5pm on a working day but not picked up until the following day, we would have lost a working day already. If staff were off sick or on leave, the timeframe may be missed. Our joint sector policy currently stipulates a 5 working day acknowledgement timeframe and this works well.
South Eastern Regional College	Disagree; 3 working days is very tight. If a complaint is received at 5pm on a working day but not picked up until the following day, we would have lost a working day already. If staff were off sick or on leave, the timeframe may be missed. The FE sector policy currently stipulates a 5 working day acknowledgement timeframe and this works well.

HOUSING SECTOR

Organisation name	Response
Co-Ownership Housing Association	We agree that the timeframes themselves would appear to be appropriate in the circumstances, subject to our comments
Clanmil Housing Association	No response to question.
Choice Housing Association	Acknowledgement within 3 working days provides the complainant prompt assurance that their complaint has been received and will be addressed. 'Working days' also provides sufficient leeway to enable Associations to meet this target providing high standards of customer care.
Ark Housing Association	Agree
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	The Housing Executive currently has a target to acknowledge complaints at investigation stage(s) within 3 days. As such we would be supportive of this proposal.
Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations	Agreed (with due regard for holiday periods etc) Acknowledgement within 3 working days provides the complainant prompt assurance that their complaint has been received and will be addressed. Working days also provides sufficient leeway to enable Associations to meet this target providing high standards of customer care

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Organisation name	Response
Ards and North Down Borough Council	<p>This timescale would be difficult to sustain due to certain situations that may occur for e.g. the manager in that department may be on leave that is required to deal with the specialist complaint. To be make this more streamline and fair to the customer we feel the timescale again for this should be increased.</p> <p>Staff should always endeavour to resolve the complaint as soon as possible but if it is complex and requires specialist advice this may take longer.</p> <p>If the customer doesn't get a resolution at 1st Stage a letter should be issued to the customer from Frontline services saying that it will passed on to Stage 2 and the name of the manager it has been assigned to and this will be their acknowledgement and they have a further 20 working days to resolve.</p>
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council	5 working days at most may be more achievable.
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council	Agree with this point.
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council	This is an acceptable timescale which reassures the complainant the matter is being considered by the public body.
Fermanagh & Omagh District Council	Agreed
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council	Council supports this approach. This is in line with our current Council policy.
Belfast City Council	Agree. This is achievable and is good practice.
Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council	Yes, we completely agree. This is our current approach.
Mid Ulster Council	No response to question.
Northern Ireland Local Government Officer's Superannuation Committee	Currently NILGOSC policy is to provide an acknowledgement within 5 working days.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Organisation name	Response
Department of Education	No response to question.
Department for Communities	No response to question
Department for Justice	No response to question.
Department for Health	No response to question.
Department for Economy	Agreed. This reflects current DfE procedures.
National Museums NI	No response to question.
Land & Property Services	LPS acknowledges our complaints in two days.
Northern Ireland Audit Office	NIAO agrees with this proposal, as it is imperative to keep momentum in the investigation and provide clear communication to the complainant throughout the process.
Probation Board for Northern Ireland	PBNI agree with this.
The Consumer Council Northern Ireland	Agree - this is in keeping with our own current process. When we acknowledge the complaint, we thank them for allowing us the opportunity to investigate their complaint and provide them with either a hard copy (if by letter), a PDF of our Complaints Process, or a link to the process/policy on our website. This ensures that the consumer is aware of the process from the outset. We also advise them that we will endeavour to respond within 10 working days and if this is not possible, we will contact them in advance of this to inform them of any delays and also the date when we are likely to respond.
Charity Commission for Northern Ireland	While this would be an ideal scenario, this is not always possible, particularly where the organisation has a very small staff number working under a range of high pressure challenges. For example, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland has a small staff team, with a single staff member tasked with co-ordinating complaints about service, amongst a series of other duties. During times of high staff leave or work pressures, it would be extremely difficult to ensure an acknowledgement which included clarification on the points of complaint and the outcome sought is issued within just three working days. From experience, some complaints are not detailed in a clear and straightforward manner but must be extracted from lengthy correspondence on a wide range of issues, requests and queries. This can be a somewhat timely process in order to ensure that no complaints or requests are missed, that the complaint issues are clearly identified and understanding can be clarified in the acknowledgement. Some complaint matters may also need to be discussed with other teams or at senior management level before such an acknowledgement could be issued, again this may take some time.

OTHER

Organisation name	Response
Information Commissioner's Office	No response to question.
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	No response to question.
Alliance Party	Where possible, detail of action being taken at this stage should be provided.