

Complaints Procedure

At SEMLEP we are committed to providing a high-quality service, at all times. Our Assurance Framework sets out how we make decisions and manage public money and sets the standards to expect from SEMLEP. However, we recognise that sometimes any organisation can fall short and we need you to help us by telling us when we get things wrong. We will aim to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible. Please be assured that we will listen to what you have to say and treat all complaints and feedback both seriously and fairly.

The LEP is committed to creating a work environment with the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In view of this commitment we encourage anyone with serious concerns about any aspect of the LEP's work to come forward and voice those concerns without fear of reprisal. Please note that in addition to the complaints procedure set out below we have a special procedure set out in appendix 1 to this document for anyone wishing to make a sensitive or highly confidential complaint. Please be aware that in all cases SEMLEP will respect your confidentiality and ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) implemented from 2018.

Making a Complaint

Please provide us with as much detail as you can to help us investigate your complaint or feedback including the following information:

- The nature of the problem
- When and where the problem occurred
- Provide any evidence you have including emails or letters
- If possible, provide us with the person/persons' name who you feel is responsible for this issue

Once we have received your complaint or feedback we will reply either in writing, by telephone or email, within 15 working days. If it is not possible for us to provide you with an adequate and in-depth answer within this time, we will inform you of this issue and tell you what we are doing to deal with it, when you can expect the full reply and from whom.

SEMLEP does offer a number of Government Funded programmes. Where your complaint is about Local Growth Fund, Growing Places Fund or Regional Growth Fund please indicate this and note that we are bound by specific terms of our Assurance Framework on the management of those funds.

If your complaint is concerning business support or grant managed by by the Growth Hub then please indicate that in your submission.

If your complaint is concerning an appeal against a decision by a Grant Panel including on Community Grants or European Structural Investment Funds then please note that your complaint will be investigated and may be handled through a separate process with reference to the Managing Authorities for those funds.

We will always acknowledge where things could have been done better and tell you what we will do in the future to ensure that the same thing doesn't happen again. Equally, if we don't agree with your complaint, we will let you know why. At the conclusion of your complaint we will write to you setting out the final position and actions.

Please send your complaints or feedback to the address below:

Operations Manager
SEMLEP
Cranfield Innovation Centre
University Way
Cranfield
MK43 0BT

Or via email to:
info@semlep.com with the word COMPLAINT in the subject line.

For all general enquiries please phone the office on 01234 436100

What to do if you aren't satisfied

The full reply to your complaint will include details of who to contact next if you think we haven't dealt with it properly; this will usually be the Chair of SEMLEP depending on the situation.

If you are still not satisfied with the response from SEMLEP then you can approach the Accountable Body for SEMLEP which is Luton Borough Council. They oversee the governance and management of SEMLEP and you can contact them concerning the complaint. Please write to:

S151 Officer: Dev Gopal
Luton Borough Council
Town Hall
Luton LU1 2BQ

If you remain unsatisfied, you may contact the area office of the Cities and Local Growth Team at the Department of Business, Energy, Industrial Strategy:

Cities and Local Growth Unit
Apex Court, City Link,
Nottingham NG2 4LA.

Monitoring and Reporting

SEMLEP Finance Risk and Audit Committee will annually review the Complaints Policy and the Complaints Register.

Appendix 1: Confidential reporting of complaints

This policy is for a grievance or private complaint which is a dispute about the individuals own position and has no or very limited public interest, but you wish the issue to be treated highly confidentially.

However, if a member of the public or third party believes that their complaint concerns a wider impact, danger, risk, contravention of rules or illegality and they are acting in the **wider public interest**, usually because it threatens others or impacts on public funds, we would direct them to the Whistleblowing policy.

Confidentiality

If a member of the public or a third party wants to make a confidential complaint or raise a concern, it will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made to protect the person's identity if they wish to remain anonymous. SEMLEP will investigate all complaints or allegations.

Anonymous allegations

SEMLEP takes all complaints and concerns raised by members of the public and third parties seriously. We will investigate anonymous allegations but remind complainants that when people put their names to an allegation the ability to investigate and therefore reach firm conclusions is strengthened. Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the LEP. When exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised;
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government may request information arising from this process if they have concerns regarding SEMLEP or have been approached with similar complaints. The expectation is that this information will be provided on an anonymous basis, but it may be necessary to provide personal details to progress a complaint.

As stated above, where details are gathered, SEMLEP will put in place appropriate data protection arrangements in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) implemented from 2018.

Confidential Complaints Procedure

SEMLEP is aware that our ordinary complaints procedure may not be suitable if someone wants the complaint to remain confidential.

If you would like to make a confidential complaint, please write or email to:

SEMLEP Chief Executive, as above, and state that you want the complaint to remain confidential on the letter on in the subject line of the email.

Action taken by the LEP

The SEMLEP Chief Executive will investigate the complaint. You can expect them to:

- Contact you within 10 working days to acknowledge the complaint and discuss the appropriate course of action.
- Write to you within 15 working days with findings of the investigation. If the investigation has not concluded within 15 working days, the officer will write to you to give reasons for the delay in resolving the complaint.
- Take the necessary steps to rectify the issue.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the complaint or the complaint involves those responsible for the confidential complaints procedure:

You can escalate your concerns through other organisations mentioned in the normal complaints procedure: Luton Borough Council via the s151 officer. Luton Borough Council has its own confidentiality procedures.

If you are either unable to raise the matter with SEMLEP or you are dissatisfied with the action taken by SEMLEP and/or Luton Borough Council, you can report it direct to the Cities and Local Growth Unit in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, at the following email address:

LEPPolicy@communities.gsi.gov.uk

or by writing to LEP Policy Deputy Director, Cities and Local Growth Unit, Fry Block, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

You should clearly mark your email or letter as “Official - Complaints”.

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