

SUSSEX INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

SERVICE PLAN & PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Introduction

To promote increasing standards and a high level of customer satisfaction the Authority has developed and adopted a 'Service Plan'. The Service Plan enables stakeholders, customers and the wider public can easily understand the level of service they should expect.

The Service Plan with other planning commitments contributes toward the Authority delivering high level objectives defined in central government guidance to IFCAs concerning service delivery.

The Service Plan is subject to review and reflects the specific needs of those the Authority serves. Such as individuals involved in the marine fishing and food sector.

Customer Charter

As soon as the Sussex IFCA was established, we put in place a 'Customer Charter' which states that:

We are committed to being a transparent and accountable organisation, we want you to know what you can expect from us and the level of service we will provide.

Our Promise

The six-point promise shows what you can expect from us.

1. We will be polite and respectful in all our dealings with you.
2. We will respond to you via the communication channel that you specify whenever we can (in person, the telephone, by email or letter).
3. We will serve you in a timely manner.
4. We will own your enquiry by taking responsibility for resolving it.
5. We will listen to your point of view.
6. We will provide you with accurate information that you can rely on.

Practical ways of working to maintain our commitments.

The staff

Our staff will be recognisable in the workplace wearing uniforms or logo marked clothing. They will be professionally equipped and dressed appropriately for their work.

Where we operate

The Authority maintains a strong sea-going capability to ensure we have a presence in the Sussex coastal waters we manage. We also actively present throughout the Sussex Coastal belt with emphasis on those communities in which commercial and recreational fishing vessels are based.

Communications options

Provision of email, telephone, fax and face to face communications will always be available from the service

Visitor facilities

Provision of accessible visitor facilities with public transport access are provided. When appropriate the Authority may use other organisations premises to meet with the public.

Business hours

09:00 to 17:00 the phone lines should direct you to a member of staff. Our staff are often present in the office facility outside these times and will endeavour to answer incoming calls if possible.

Office Opening Times

The office business hours are 09:00 to 17:00, however because of officer movements it is often open outside these times (both earlier and later). Due to the size of the organisation in exceptional circumstances (e.g. availability of staff) the office may be closed during the 09:00 to 17:00; we endeavour to minimise this situation.

Messaging Service & out of hours contact for urgent business

We provide a 24hr messaging service, with details for emergency numbers.

Complaints and complements

1.1 Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority aim to deliver high quality and efficient services. We are always trying to do better, and we welcome feedback. It is important because it helps us build on strengths and learn from mistakes. If things go wrong, we want to put them right as fairly and as quickly as possible. When things go well, we appreciate compliments and suggestions. Comments and suggestions let us know how we can improve our services. We record complaints, comments, and compliments so that we can manage them efficiently and effectively and monitor them.

Sussex IFCA's commitment

1.2 We define a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction about our services or the services of our contractors'.

1.3 If you want to make a complaint, we will:

- Make it easy for you to contact us
- Deal with your complaint quickly,
- Give you a full answer
- Be polite and professional in how we deal with you
- Aim to reply in 10 working days, or tell you if we need longer to deal with your complaint
- Complete stage 2 and 3 complaints within 12 weeks
- Keep you informed about progress at all stages
- Apologise if we have made a mistake and do our best to put things right as quickly as possible.

1.4 We also welcome compliments about things we have done right, and comments and suggestions to help us improve our services.

1.5 If you need help to understand this policy, explain your complaint or comment, or understand our response please contact us or ask someone to speak to us and we will try to help you.

2. HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

2.1 Sussex IFCA has a three stage complaints procedure. We know how important it is for Complaints to be taken seriously and dealt with quickly and fully in an impartial way.

Stage 1 – informal complaints

2.2 You can contact us via telephone, email, fax, letter or in person. The contact information you need is on our website. It is also at the end of this policy document. You can also ask a Sussex IFCA member or someone else to contact us on your behalf.

2.3 Many complaints are straight forward and can be dealt with on the spot by the person or team providing the service. We aim to deal with as many complaints as possible at this stage. We aim to respond to stage one complaints in 10 working days.

2.4 If we can't resolve your complaint, we will let you know what we will do and when you can expect a response. If we do not hear anything from you for 3 months after you make your complaint and the matter is not resolved, we will assume you don't want to follow it up and close the complaint.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaints

2.5 We will try to resolve your complaint informally, but if it is not possible (or you do not want to do this) the next stage is more formal. We ask you to make your complaint in writing if possible.

2.6 This means we have an accurate and complete record of your complaint in your own words helps to make sure there is no confusion or misunderstanding about your complaint. Please set out your complaint as fully and clearly as possible, including when the incident took place and the name of the person you are complaining about, if you know it.

2.7 If you have difficulty making your complaint in writing, please contact us to discuss how we can support you in making your complaint.

2.8 Your complaint will be recorded and referred to the Chief Fisheries & Conservation Officer or the Deputy Chief, who will investigate it. If the complaint is about the Chief Fisheries & Conservation Officer, it will be investigated by the Deputy Chief or another senior officer.

2.9 We will acknowledge your complaint in 10 working days and let you know who is dealing with it. We aim to respond to stage 2 complaints within 20 working days. If we can't reply to you in that time, we will let you know what we will do and when you can expect a reply.

2.10 If your complaint is upheld you will receive a written apology and an explanation of any redress and any steps to prevent a similar problem recurring.

Stage 3 – referral to the Chairman

2.11 If you have gone through the formal stage 2 complaints procedure and you are not satisfied with the results of the investigation, you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed by the Sussex IFCA Chairman who in turn may refer to members of the relevant Subcommittee dealing with standards and personnel. We aim to respond to stage 3 complaints in 20 working days.

2.12 If your complaint is upheld you will receive a written apology and an explanation of any redress and any steps to prevent a similar problem recurring.

2.13 All comments and complaints are treated confidentially and will not disadvantage you in any future dealings with Sussex IFCA. It may not always be possible to keep your details confidential, such as where your complaint is about a third party or where particular legislation applies to your complaint.

3. WHAT IF I'M NOT SATISFIED?

3.1 We aim to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction. If that doesn't happen, you can refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

3.2 The Ombudsman investigates complaints of maladministration. Maladministration means that we have done something we should not have done, done something the wrong way, or have not done something we should have. The Ombudsman will not investigate your complaint just because you disagree with the decision made by Sussex IFCA. The Ombudsman recommends that you take your complaint through our internal complaints procedure before referring it to them.

3.3 In some cases, relations between you and Sussex IFCA may deteriorate while your complaint is being investigated. If this happens and there is little chance of getting a satisfactory outcome there is often little point in completing all stages of the complaint's procedure. When this happens, the Ombudsman may be prepared to consider your complaint, before Sussex IFCA's complaints procedure has finished.

4. HOW DO I GIVE COMPLIMENTS AND MAKE COMMENTS ON SUSSEX IFCA'S WORK?

4.1 There may be times when you think that we have done a really good job or one of the people who work for us has impressed you. If this happens, please let us know. We aim to constantly improve what we do, and examples of things we do well are just as important as understanding how we can do things better after making a mistake.

4.2 If you want to pay us a compliment or make a comment or suggestion about our services or our staff please email, write or telephone us.

5. HOW TO CONTACT US

Telephone: 01273 454407

Postal Address:
Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority
12a Riverside Business Centre
Brighton Road
Shoreham-by-Sea
West Sussex
BN43 6RE

Email: admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk