

LHA Feedback & Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure

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Responsible area	Strategy & Governance
Responsible position	Manager, Strategy & Governance
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Purpose

1. Well-handled feedback and complaints help the Labour Hire Authority (LHA) resolve problems efficiently, improve services and maintain public trust. They also give LHA valuable information about how its work is experienced and allow LHA to demonstrate its commitment to acting with integrity, transparency and accountability.
2. This Policy explains how LHA manages feedback and complaints about LHA and its people and includes a summary of the procedure.

Applies to

3. This Policy applies to:
 - a. all workplace participants, including employees, contractors, subcontractors, consultants and volunteers referred to collectively in this Policy as 'employees';
 - b. complaints made under s92 *Labour Hire Licensing Act 2018* (Vic) regarding the exercise of a power by an inspector; and
 - c. all feedback and complaints about LHA or its employees.

Does not apply to

4. This Policy does not apply to:

- a. **feedback or complaints about the labour hire providers or the labour hire industry**, including information about non-compliance shared using LHA's Report a Problem. See Divisional guidance on how these are dealt with.
- b. **internal complaints between LHA employees** including VPS Code of Conduct complaints which are dealt with in accordance with the LHA Internal Complaints Policy.

Legislative Context

5. This Policy operationalises the key obligations for dealing with feedback and complaints under the following legislation:
 - a. *Labour Hire Licensing Act 2018* (Vic)
 - b. *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic)
 - c. *Ombudsman Act 1973* (Vic)
 - d. *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
 - e. *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic)
 - f. *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (Vic)
 - g. *Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011* (Vic)
 - h. *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic)
 - i. *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic)
 - j. *Financial Management Act 1994* (Vic)

Definitions

6. The following definitions apply to this Policy.

TERM	DEFINITION
About LHA	About any aspect of LHA's operations, services, actions or decisions.
External complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction with LHA or its employees about LHA's operations, services, actions or decisions, to which a response is explicitly or implicitly expected. May be express or implied.
Feedback	A compliment, criticism, comment or suggestion about LHA or its employees to which a response is either not sought or (other than to acknowledge receipt) it is not reasonable to expect a response.
Simple complaints	A complaint that is straightforward, low-risk and easily understood, where the issues are limited in scope, the impact is minor and a detailed investigation is not required in order to identify and determine the issues raised.
Early resolution	Means resolving a simple complaint as close as possible to the point where it was raised (for example by the frontline or receiving team), using an explanation, apology, clarification or simple action.
Unreasonable complaints	See clauses 18 – 20 of this Policy.

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Roles & responsibilities

7. The following roles and responsibilities apply to Feedback and Complaints management.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Commissioner	a. Accountable for promoting and resourcing a positive feedback and complaints handling culture, effective complaints handling processes and appropriate internal quality controls.¹ b. Receives and responds to reports on feedback and complaint trends, risks and systemic issues. c. Determines LHA's response to complaints about LHA operations or employees involving fraud or corruption and to protected disclosures.²
Divisional Directors	a. Support LHA employees to comply with this Policy. b. Work with the centralised feedback and complaints function. c. Ensure timely and high-quality responses to complaints within their Divisions and implement corrective actions or service improvements arising from feedback and complaints.
Chief Operating Officer (COO)	a. Supports the Commissioner. b. Oversees LHA's response to serious, complex, high risk and similar complaints, including those involving fraud and corruption, protected disclosures and serious data breach and privacy complaints³.
Director, Intelligence, Compliance and Enforcement	a. Investigates complaints about inspectors under section 92 of the <i>Labour Hire Licensing Act 2018</i> (Vic) b. Requests the Manager, Strategy & Governance conduct or oversee an investigation where required to manage any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.
Branch Managers and Line Managers	a. Support Divisional Directors to implement this Policy. b. Ensure LHA employees reporting to them know how to identify, record and refer complaints and feedback received in operational settings, (including during field work, enquiries and other direct engagement with external parties) in accordance with this Policy.
Manager, People & Culture	a. Provides advice on the relationship between complaint outcomes and potential misconduct and performance issues for individual LHA employees who are the subject of a complaint.

¹ See Victorian Ombudsman Good Practice guide: Complaint Handling for Victorian Public Sector organisations. See also Financial Management Act

² See LHA Fraud and Corruption Control Policy.

³ See LHA Fraud and Corruption Control Policy, LHA Protected Disclosures Policy, and the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic).

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ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Manager, Strategy & Governance	a. Oversees the centralised feedback and complaints function. b. Ensures feedback and complaints handling complies with this Policy, related policies, the VPS Code of Conduct and the VPSC Employment Principles and Standards.
Policy and Governance Advisor	a. Conducts the centralised feedback and complaints function in accordance with this Policy.
All LHA employees	a. Treat complaints and feedback seriously, respectfully and professionally. b. Recognise when a person is providing feedback or making a complaint even if the person does not use those specific words. c. Assist people use the feedback and complaints process. d. Where safe and appropriate, resolve simple complaints⁴ early and promptly record and refer all other feedback and complaints to the centralised feedback and complaints function. e. Cooperate with feedback and complaint handling policies and procedures, including providing information, records and responses when requested. f. Identify and escalate risks, conflicts of interest, integrity or systemic issues promptly.

Principles

8. LHA is committed to managing feedback and complaints in accordance with these principles.
- a. **Accessible and safe.** Make it easy for people to provide feedback and raise concerns. Take reasonable steps to protect LHA employees from aggression, distress or other psychosocial harm when dealing with complaints⁵.
 - b. **Responsive.** Acknowledge feedback and complaints promptly. Manage complaints in a timely way, prioritising urgent matters.
 - c. **Fair.** Treat everyone impartially. Manage complaints in a way that is consistent, proportionate to the issues raised, and fair to complainants, affected persons and LHA employees. LHA employees who are the subject of a complaint must not investigate it or determine its outcome.
 - d. **Respect and safety.** Communicate professionally with all stakeholders. Recognise power imbalances and respond in an informed and culturally safe manner.
 - e. **Confidentiality and privacy.** Handle information in accordance with privacy, confidentiality and record-keeping obligations. Share information on a need to know basis and explain clearly how we handle personal information.

⁴ See definition of Simple complaints at clause XX of this Policy.

⁵ See LHA Health and Safety Policy.

- f. **Accountability.** Take accountability for LHA's operations. Provide clear reasons for investigation outcomes. Ensure complaint investigations are documented, evidence-based and able to be reviewed internally or externally (for example by the Victorian Ombudsman).
- g. **Continuous improvement.** Analyse and document feedback and complaints data, report regularly (using de-identified information where appropriate) and use insights to improve operations, regulatory practice and the experience of people we work with.
- h. **Quality and oversight.** Maintain a centralised complaints function within Strategy & Governance Branch, supervised and monitored by the COO, to support consistent, high - quality practice.

Centralised Feedback and Complaints function

- 9. LHA uses a centralised intake, triage and oversight model, managed by Strategy & Governance. The model ensures a complete organisational record is maintained, applies consistent triage, oversees timeframes and quality and ensures system-wide reporting and learning.
- 10. Receipt or intake of feedback and complaints is a shared responsibility of all employees. Feedback and complaints may be received through any channel, including online, by post, email, telephone, and through public-facing teams such as the Enquiries team, LHA inspectors and LHA employees conducting field visits or attending events or forums.
- 11. Employees may encourage people wanting to provide feedback and raise concerns to complete the online form. Where this is not possible, employees must record feedback and complaints using this form and promptly refer them to the dedicated central inbox complaints@labourhireauthority.vic.gov.au.

Who may provide feedback or complain

- 12. Any individual or organisation can provide feedback or make a complaint about LHA or its employees.
- 13. **Referrals:** Feedback or complaints may be referred to LHA by external organisations such as the Victorian Ombudsman or a Minister's office. These referrals may carry specific obligations or timelines. Strategy & Governance must ensure the Commissioner and COO are promptly notified of all feedback and complaints referrals made to LHA by an external organisation (for example, the Victorian Ombudsman, a Minister's office or other government representative, an industry body).
- 14. **Anonymous feedback and complaints:** LHA accepts anonymous feedback and complaints using the centralised function. The extent to which we can investigate and respond to anonymous complaints depends on the quality of information received.

Categories of feedback and complaints

- 15. The following categories of feedback and complaints may be received at LHA and are dealt with as follows.
 - a. **Complaints about LHA and/or its employees.** All complaints are referred to the central complaints function. Simple complaints are resolved as close as possible to the intake point where possible and recorded. Following triage and assessment, Strategy & Governance liaise with the Branch Manager and Divisional Director responsible for the

service and/or employee about whom the complaint has been made. If required, the matter is escalated to the COO.

- b. **Privacy complaints** (including potential data breach complaints). Always prioritised as urgent and emailed directly to the Senior Information Governance Advisor cc the Manager, Strategy & Governance and the central complaints function inbox.
- c. **Inspector complaints** – LHA is obliged to investigate complaints about an inspector⁶. Always prioritised using the centralised complaints function who liaise with the Director, Intelligence, Compliance and Enforcement as set out in this Policy.
- d. **Requests to review an LHA decision.** As LHA is not authorised to review its own decisions, these requests are recorded and complainants referred to external review bodies such as the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the Victorian Ombudsman, the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner.
- e. **Protected disclosures** are referred to the central complaints function who handle them in accordance with the LHA Public Interest Disclosures Policy.
- f. **Procurement complaints from suppliers.** Handled using the centralised feedback and complaints function and in accordance with the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB) framework and managed with input from Finance. Unresolved goods and services procurement complaints may be referred to the VGPB.
- g. **Referrals from external agencies** Prioritised immediately upon receipt and handled using the centralised feedback and complaints function.

Privacy

- 16. When gathering information to respond to a complaint, we will only:
 - a. use it to deal with the complaint or to address systemic issues arising from the complaint;
 - b. provide it in a de-identified format when disclosing data to the public;
 - c. share it with staff on a need-to-know basis; and
 - d. act in accordance with our legislative obligations under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic).

Special cases – limiting or ceasing complaint handling

Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct

- 17. Unreasonable complaint conduct is behaviour that, due to its nature or frequency, unreasonably consumes resources or impacts people's safety or wellbeing (including LHA employees and others). Examples include:
 - a. unreasonable persistence – repeated contacts over a short period or repeated complaints after all reviews are exhausted.
 - b. unreasonable demands – insisting on specific outcomes or timeframes; dictating priority/handling method
 - c. unreasonable lack of cooperation - refusing to provide information; disorganised submissions

⁶ Section 92, *Labour Hire Licensing Act 2018* (Vic) requires LHA investigate complaints about an inspector's exercise of powers under Part 5 of the Act.

- d. unreasonable arguments - conspiracy theories; false/inflammatory claims; refusing to accept final decisions
 - e. abuse, harassment - verbal abuse, threats, intimidation of staff.
18. All unreasonable conduct and LHA's actions in response, must be briefly documented to ensure transparency and accountability.
19. Where a complainant engages in unreasonable conduct, LHA may:
- a. change communication methods (for example, require only written contact through a single contact person or intake point).
 - b. restrict access (frequency/length/access point)
 - c. issue a formal warning that LHA may stop dealing with the complaint if the conduct continues.
 - d. cease dealing with the complaint and refer the complainant to the appropriate external body.
 - e. refer the matter to Victoria Police (threats/abuse/harassment).

Trivial or vexatious complaints

20. LHA will not investigate complaints that are assessed as:
- a. trivial, frivolous or vexatious
 - b. lacking substance or credibility
21. These complaints are dismissed and the complainant informed of this decision in writing (where contact details are available).

Feedback and Complaints Handling Procedure

Receipt and recording

22. LHA accepts feedback and complaints through multiple accessible channels and will assist people who need help to raise a concern. All feedback and complaints are recorded in a central repository so they can be tracked, managed and reported on.

Documenting feedback and complaints

23. Feedback and complaints must always be documented.
24. This is done by either:
- a. the complainant/provider of feedback,
 - b. a person acting on behalf of the complainant/provider of feedback; or
 - c. the LHA employee who receives the complaint or feedback (e.g. documenting a telephone complaint using the online LHA Complaint Form).

Information required – complaints

25. Ideally complaints should include:
- a. Name and contact details of the complainant
 - b. What happened, when and where and
 - c. Outcome sought.

26. Supporting documentation may be provided but is not required. If LHA needs specific documentation to investigate, it will request it.

Acknowledgement

27. Feedback and complaints will be acknowledged promptly (within 3 business days of receipt).
28. The acknowledgement should explain the next steps, expected timeframes, a contact point and any immediate action being taken.

Assessment and triage

29. Each feedback or complaint must be assessed to determine its nature, seriousness, urgency, complexity, risks, the complainant's desired outcome, any related LHA matters, the LHA business area and LHA employees about which concerns have been alleged, and whether another process or statutory framework applies. Where feedback has been received, in most cases no further action will be required.
30. Triage must also consider whether the complaint raises health and safety, systemic, integrity, human rights, privacy or other issues requiring special handling or referral.
31. Based on the assessment outlined in clauses 26 and 27, if further action is required, triage identifies which role (for example line Manager, Branch Manager, Manager Strategy and Governance or Divisional Director) should oversee the investigation, relationship to any existing LHA matters and appropriate timelines.
32. Strategy & Governance will liaise with relevant Managers to agree next steps, manage integrity issues such as conflicts of interest and keep the complainant informed.

Responding to feedback

33. Feedback can be about any aspect of LHA or its employees. Feedback unrelated to LHA or its employees may be acknowledged and recorded but will not be further actioned.
34. Following triage by Strategy and Governance, feedback is:
- emailed to the Divisional Director or if in doubt, to the COO who then share it with LHA employees as appropriate
 - acknowledged using the precedent response
 - where appropriate, included in de-identified form in reports to Executive Committee and Audit & Risk Committee.

Early resolution of simple matters

35. Where appropriate simple matters should be resolved quickly and as close as possible to the intake point, provided this is safe, fair and consistent with this Policy in particular the category of complaint and applicable legislation.

Formal investigation

36. Complaints that are not simple must proceed to formal handling and investigation. Proportionate to the issues raised, formal investigation may include detailed enquiries, review of records, consultation with relevant employees and a documented outcome.
37. Some categories of complaint will have a specific investigation process identified in the associated LHA Policy. Where no policy exists, an investigation will be undertaken in according with the principles of the Policy and procedural fairness.

Escalation

38. A matter must be escalated where its risk, seriousness, complexity, sensitivity or potential impact requires a higher level of oversight, a different decision maker or referral to another business area or body.
39. Escalation may occur at any stage of the feedback and complaints handling life cycle.
40. Decisions about escalation are agreed between Strategy and Governance, the COO and where appropriate the senior managers of the business area or employees who are the subject of the complaint.

Response and outcome

41. LHA provides a clear written outcome once a complaint has been formally investigated. Responses should be in plain English, tailored to the needs of the complainant and appropriate to the nature and complexity of the matter. Strategy & Governance support and oversee the outcome and response.

Closure and recording

42. A feedback or complaint matter may be closed when the response has been provided and any agreed action has been completed. Closure records must support quality assurance, internal review, external scrutiny and organisational learning.

Learning and improvement

43. Feedback and complaint data is regularly reviewed to identify trends, recurring issues, service gaps, barriers to access, risks and improvement opportunities. LHA uses these insights to improve its operations and regulatory practice.

External Review

44. A complainant who is not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint may be referred to one or more of the following if relevant to the nature of their complaint.
 - a. Victorian Ombudsman – investigates complaints about VPS agencies, reviews complaint handling practices of VPS agencies including LHA.
 - b. Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner – investigates privacy complaints.
 - c. IBAC – investigates allegations of corruption and serious misconduct by VPS agencies.

Governance and administration

Reporting on feedback and complaints

45. Feedback and complaints data is regularly analysed to identify improvement opportunities and reported on using de-identified data as appropriate to the Commissioner (as required) and Executive Committee (quarterly).

Relationship between complaints and an LHA employee's performance including disciplinary issues

46. Complaints relating to the work of an LHA employee are shared with that employee so the issues can be understood, investigated and addressed.
47. Any performance or disciplinary issues identified as a result of a complaint investigation and outcome must be referred to the Manager, People & Culture who will advise on next steps.

48. LHA must act reasonably and in a procedurally fair way when a complaints investigation intersects with potential performance or disciplinary issues. See the LHA Internal Complaints Policy, the VPS Common Policies on Managing Employee Performance, Misconduct and Review of Actions and the VPSC Employment Principles and Standards.

Related policies

49. The following documents are related to this Policy:
- LHA Internal Complaints Policy
 - LHA Records Management Policy
 - LHA Procurement Policy
 - LHA Conflict of Interest Policy
 - VPS Common policies on misconduct, review of actions, employee performance

Review

50. This Policy must be reviewed three years after the date approved by the Commissioner or before that date in the following circumstances:
- a machinery of government change that affects the LHA;
 - the LHA undergoes a major organisational change;
 - major operational issues have been identified in respect of the Policy;
 - a new Commissioner is appointed;
 - a review is requested by the Executive Committee or the Audit and Risk Committee.
51. The review must consider the effectiveness of the Policy in meeting its purpose, whether it has promoted the Policy Principles, and any other matter that would be relevant to assessing its operation, including any specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based key performance indicators.
52. The Executive Committee will be notified of the outcome of the review. Any minor or major changes to the Policy made as a result of the review must then be endorsed by the Executive Committee and approved by the Commissioner to take effect.

Revision authority

53. Any major change to this Policy that would significantly affect the intention, outcomes, and operation of the Policy, and any change following a review of the Policy, must be endorsed by the Executive Committee and approved by the Commissioner.
54. Any minor change that would not result in a substantive change can be approved by a relevant Manager (other than a minor change following a review of this Policy, which must be endorsed by the Executive Committee and approved by the Commissioner, as discussed above).
55. A minor change may include minor changes to the text of the Policy (for instance to correct typographical errors or changes to names, expressions, and terminology to align with current practices), updates to relevant contact persons and details, and minor updates to relevant dates, timeframes, and metrics.

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Version control

Date	Author	Approved by	Description
11 June 2026	COO Manager, Strategy & Governance Policy & Governance Advisor	Commissioner	New Policy

Approval

56. This Policy was endorsed by the Executive Committee on 12 May 2026 and approved by the Commissioner on 11 June 2026.

Steve Dargavel
Labour Hire Licensing Commissioner