

Background: Is a formal complaint necessary?

1. The Statistics Commission welcomes feedback on its work from users and producers of National Statistics, from suppliers of the raw data on which National Statistics are based, and from the wider community. We have set up a "feedback" area on our website to encourage this (and also to make it easy to send us comments on any aspects of National Statistics), and are equally happy to receive feedback in other ways. You may prefer to speak or write directly to members of staff or commissioners, with whom you are in contact.
2. We will try to resolve any concerns as they arise. The rest of this note is concerned with complaints; that is, with the more formal procedure we will follow if you are not satisfied with our response to informal comments or feedback, or where you wish, for whatever reason, to make a formal complaint in the first instance.

What this guidance covers

3. The guidance covers formal complaints about the conduct or actions of commissioners and their staff. It does not cover formal complaints about the Office for National Statistics, which should be addressed to the relevant business area or to the National Statistician:

Liam Murray
Private Secretary to the National Statistician
Office for National Statistics
1 Drummond Gate
London SW1P 2QQ

Email: liam.murray@ons.gov.uk

How should a complaint be presented?

4. If you decide a formal complaint is necessary, you should submit it in writing to the chief executive:

Richard Alldritt
Chief Executive
Statistics Commission
Artillery House
11-19 Artillery Row
London SW1P 1RT

Email: richard.alldritt@statscom.org.uk

The main areas of concern should be clearly set out and supported by any relevant documentary evidence. All the information you consider relevant should be forwarded at the outset. This will help in the timely handling of the complaint and reduce the need to seek further information later.

How will complaints be dealt with?

5. Your complaint will be acknowledged within three working days of receipt. The chief executive will investigate it. Normally he will seek to provide a substantive response within three weeks. However, the response time may vary according to the particular circumstances of the case. Where this is likely to be more than three weeks, you will be kept informed of the reasons for the delay and of when you can expect a full response.

Outcome of complaints

6. The chief executive of the Commission will inform you of the outcome in writing. If your complaint is upheld, you will receive an apology and an explanation. You will also be told what steps are to be taken to prevent a recurrence. If your complaint is not upheld, you will be given an explanation as to why not. Where it is not possible to reconcile your comments with those of the person complained against, however, it is likely that the outcome of the investigation will be inconclusive. If so, this will be explained to you.

7. If you remain dissatisfied, it is open to you to pursue the matter with the Commission's sponsor department, HM Treasury, by writing to:

Georgie Drummond
Economic Assessment Team
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

Email: georgie.drummond@hm-treasury.x.gsi.gov.uk

You should bear in mind, however, that any further review is likely to focus only on the handling of your case and not its outcome.

Confidentiality

8. The Commission is under an obligation to operate openly and transparently. If, exceptionally, you wish an aspect of your complaint to be handled in confidence (for example because it relates to commercial contracts) you should say so and say why. This confidentiality will be respected, but it may hamper the investigation.

Fairness

9. Complaints will be considered in a fair and even-handed manner. Regardless of the outcome of any complaint, the fact you have complained will not affect your future relationship with us.

Reporting to the Commission

10. The chief executive will report annually to the Commission on complaints received during the year.

Complaints about the chief executive

11. If the chief executive is the subject of a complaint, the chairman of the Commission will carry out the investigation or will nominate another commissioner to do so on his behalf. He will then let you know the outcome. Complaints about the chief executive should be **marked Personal** and addressed to:

Professor David Rhind
Chairman
Statistics Commission
Artillery House
11-19 Artillery Row
London SW1P 1RT

Contact and questions

12. Any questions about the procedures set out above should be addressed to Alison Eve at the Commission on 020 7273 8003 - email alison.eve@statscom.org.uk. Questions about specific complaints should be addressed to the chief executive, Richard Aldritt, on 020 7273 8008 - email richard.alldritt@statscom.org.uk, or to his PA, Carolyn Leach, on 020 7273 8001 – email carolyn.leach@statscom.org.uk.