**Music Hub Investment Programme 2024/25**

**Making a complaint**

## Introduction

Arts Council England is committed to delivering a high-quality service to applicants for funding. We take all complaints about our service seriously. If we find that we have made a mistake, we will apologise, put it right and find ways to improve our service.

This document sets out how to make a complaint about how we dealt with your application to the Music Hub Investment Programme.

Making a complaint won’t affect the level of service you receive from us and will not affect your chances of getting a grant from us in the future.

This complaint process is unique to applications made to the Music Hub Investment Programme and can’t be used for complaints about anything else.

## When to use this process

You should use this process if you think that:

* maladministration has taken place (for example, if we have delayed, made mistakes, or failed to follow the procedures in our application process).
* we have failed to give you access to information or have given you incorrect advice or information.
* we have unlawfully discriminated against you or not treated you fairly.

If we find that we have made a mistake there are several things we can do. We can for example, issue you with a formal explanation, an apology or in some cases we may look at your application again.

We can only look at your application again if:

* we discover (through dealing with a complaint) that we did not follow the published procedures for assessing your application,
* you can show that we have misunderstood a significant part of your application,
* you can show that we did not take notice of relevant information.

## When not to use this process

You may be disappointed if we turn down your application for funding, however you cannot use the complaints process to appeal against our decision if we have followed our decision-making process correctly.

You cannot use this process to complain about our policies. Please send any comments about our policies to our Chief Executive. Contact details are given in the ‘Getting in touch’ section at the end of this document.

This process can only be used to complain about your application. It cannot be used to complain about an application you did not make, or by a third party to complain about your application. Further information can be found in our [Raising a concern](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/raising-concern) process.

Do not use this complaints procedure to make a complaint about any fraud you think has taken place. You should report this to our Counter Fraud team or the police.

If you want to make a complaint about any of our other funding streams such as Developing your Creative Practice or National Lottery Project Grants, please find the complaint procedure for these programmes [here](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/making-complaint).

## How to make your complaint

We need specific information from you so that we can deal with your complaint as quickly as possible. If we do not understand your complaint, then we may ask you to summarise your complaint into your main points for us to investigate before we take any action.

You may not be sure what information you should include or how best to set out your complaint. You should set out the facts as briefly and clearly as possible. Tell us about any events in the order they happened, giving dates and details where you can.

Please be clear and tell us:

* what happened
* when
* where
* who was involved
* why you are unhappy; and
* what you would like us to do to put it right

To find useful tips on putting a complaint together visit the [Complain for Change website](http://www.complainforchange.org/).

We will keep all complaints confidential. If you make a complaint we will treat you with respect, and we ask that you treat our staff in the same way.

If you wish to make a complaint, please email: [complaints@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:complaints@artscouncil.org.uk)

Or you can write to:

Complaints

Arts Council England

The Hive

49 Lever Street

Manchester

M1 1FN

You must do this within **ten working days after the date you received your decision**. This allows us time to review your complaint, and if we have made a mistake to put it right. In some instances, this could mean reconsidering your application.

If for any reason you can’t make your complaint in writing, please [contact us](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/contact-us) using an alternative method.

We will contact you to say that we have received your complaint within five working days. We may also ask to clarify any information about your complaint at this stage.

Your complaint will initially be considered by a panel of senior Arts Council England staff drawn from different parts of the organisation. The panel will consider whether the complaint is eligible for this complaint process and if so, what actions we plan to take to resolve the complaint.

In the first instance, if we can identify how and where something may have gone wrong, we are committed to making things right as soon as possible and we will try and resolve your complaint via early resolution.

If we are not able to do so and the complaint needs further investigation, then we will process the complaint to Stage One.

**Stage One – formal response from the Arts Council**

At stage one the Complaints Manager will work with you to create the Terms of Reference for your complaint. Once you agree that we fully understand your concerns, we will investigate and respond in writing.

The Music Hub Investment Programme complaints panel will decide on who will lead an investigation and the investigator will report their findings and recommendations back to the panel. You will then receive a full response to your complaint from the Chair of the complaints panel.

We aim to respond within twenty working days of confirming the terms of reference. If we are unable to do so, we will write to you to explain why and when you can expect our response. Our response will include a copy of the investigation report to ensure transparency.

If you believe we have failed to investigate sufficiently, not fully addressed your

concerns or not provided a fair and proportionate resolution at stage, you can ask that your complaint be investigated by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

### Stage Two - The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

If you are unhappy with after receiving a Stage One response from the Independent Complaint Reviewer, you can refer you can refer your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman investigates complaints where someone believes there has been injustice or hardship because an organisation has not acted properly or has given a poor service and not put things right.

By law, the Ombudsman is independent of the Government and the civil service and has wide powers to investigate. The Ombudsman investigates complaints fairly and their service is free for everyone.

The Ombudsman does not normally investigate complaints if they have not been

through our complaints procedures first.

If you have completed our complaints process and still feel a fair or proportionate resolution has not been provided, you can contact your Member of Parliament (MP) and ask them to send your complaint to the Ombudsman. MPs’ contact details can be found at [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

**Other ways to complain and useful information:**

**Judicial review**

### Judicial review is a type of legal case where a judge (or judges) reviews the lawfulness of a decision or action made by a public authority. The judge cannot rule that a public authority must change a funding decision but can ask an authority to reconsider a decision.

## Freedom of information

Our publication scheme gives details of what information we routinely publish and where you can find it. You can find information about our publication scheme on our website [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk) or [contact us](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/contact-us).

If you want information that we do not include in our publication scheme, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you the right to ask us for it. It also sets out exemptions from that right.

All requests for information should be in writing and sent to:

Senior Officer, Information Governance  
Arts Council England  
49 Lever Street  
Manchester  
M1 1FN  
[foi@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:foi@artscouncil.org.uk)

Do not use this complaints procedure to make a complaint about the way we dealt with an information request. If you are not happy with how we handled your request, you can ask for an internal review by sending your concerns in writing to the Chief Executive - see ‘Getting in touch’ at the end of this document.

Further information on the Freedom of Information Act can be obtained from the Information Commissioner (see ‘Getting in touch’ at the end of this document).

## Your personal information

If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint. We may also give your personal information to other people and organisations if we have to do so by law or if you have given us permission.

## Equal opportunities

We are committed to equal opportunities and take complaints about unlawful discrimination seriously.

We may use complaints about discrimination to review our policies and procedures. This is to make sure we treat everyone equally.

We may record information about the ethnic background, sex and disability of everyone who makes a complaint so that we promote and maintain our equal opportunities commitment. We will keep all information confidential.

## Getting in touch

To submit a complaint, or if you need any help making a complaint, please contact the Complaints Team via email: [Complaints@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:Complaints@artscouncil.org.uk).

To submit a complaint about Arts Council policy, please contact our Chief Executive via email at [chief.executive@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:chief.executive@artscouncil.org.uk)

If you want to comment on government policy, contact:

## Department for Education (DfE)

## Telephone: 0370 000 2288 Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 5pm

[Contact DfE online](https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education)

To get information about the Freedom of Information Act you can contact:

## The Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Phone: 01625 545 700

Fax: 01625 524 510

Email: [mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk)

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman from:

## The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London

SW1P 4QP

Complaints Helpline Phone: 0845 015 4033

Email: [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk)

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