

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Michelle O'Neill MLA
Dundonald House, Ballymiscaw,
Stormont, Belfast BT4 3SB

Robin Swann MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont

22 October 2012
15091/11-15

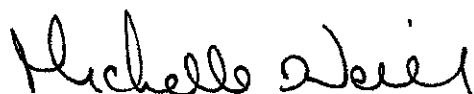
Robin Swann asked:

To ask the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the process to lodge a formal complaint under the Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme.

ANSWER

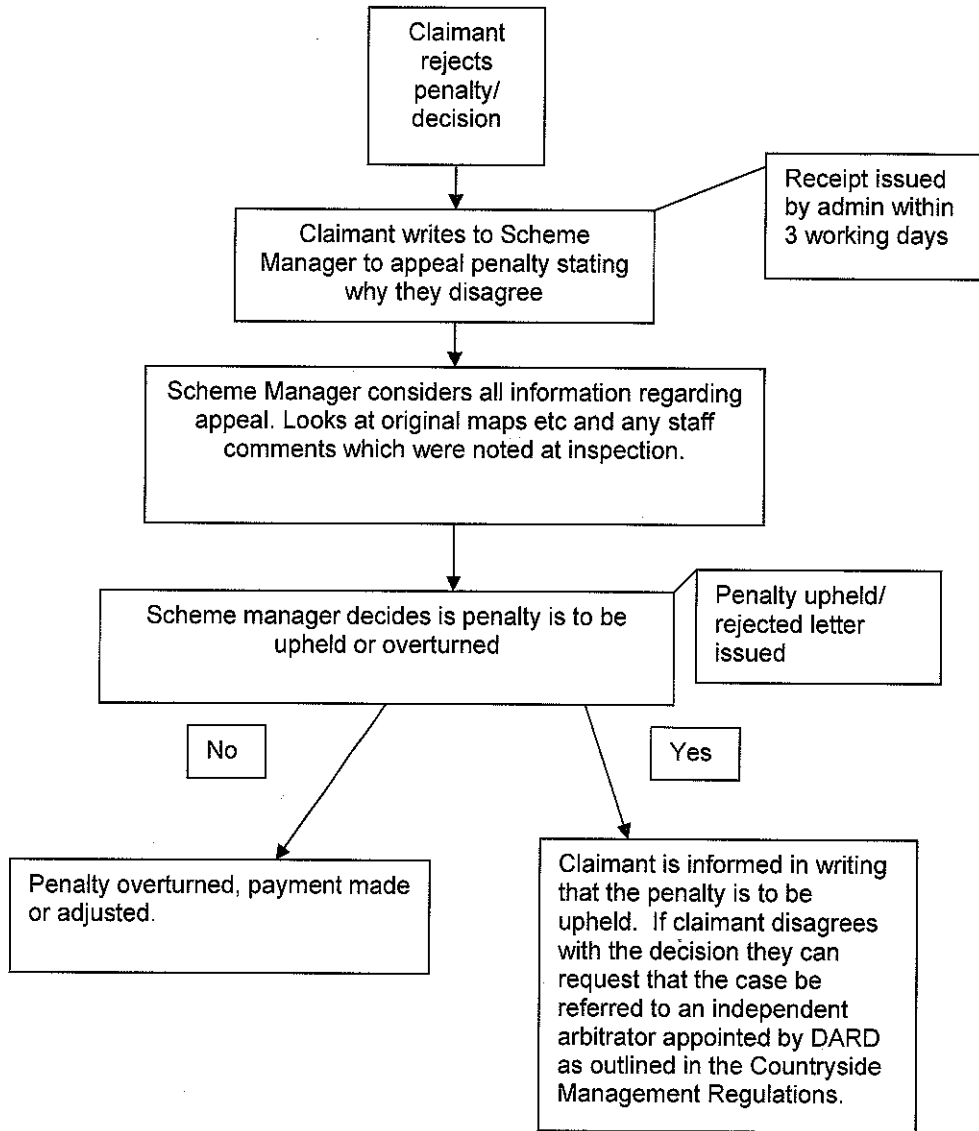
Participants in the NI Countryside Management Scheme may appeal against a penalty applied their payment. The appeals procedure is included in Annex A (placed in library).

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has a formal complaints procedure which is included in Annex B (placed in library).



MICHELLE O'NEILL MLA

Current Appeals Procedures



What to do if you are still not satisfied

If you have received a final reply from the Permanent Secretary or Chief Executive and you remain unhappy you can ask a Member of the Assembly (MLA) to refer your complaint to The Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

The Ombudsman provides a free service and is totally independent of the Government. He has wide legal powers that enable him to investigate complaints against Government Departments and their Agencies.

Usually the Ombudsman will expect you to have used our complaints procedure before he will consider your case.

You can contact the Ombudsman

In writing to: **The Ombudsman,**
Freepost BEL 1478,
Belfast, BT1 6BR

By calling at: **The Ombudsman's Offices,**
Progressive House,
33 Wellington Place,
Belfast, BT1 6HN

By telephone: **028 9023 3821** or
Free phone **0800 343424**

By fax: **028 9073 4912**

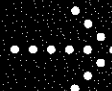
By e-mail: **ombudsman@**
ni-ombudsman.org.uk

Or by visiting their website on
<http://www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk>

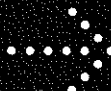
What to do if you have a complaint

Please tell us about it

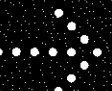
Contact the officer with whom you were dealing with or the local manager



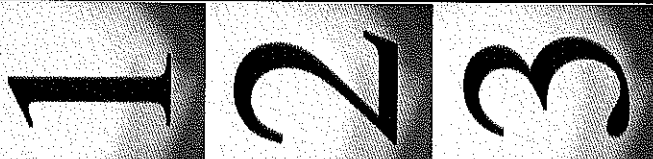
If you are not happy with their response write to the senior manager responsible



If you are still not happy write to the DARD Permanent Secretary or Agency Chief Executive



If you have received a final reply and you remain unhappy, you can ask a Member of the Assembly (MLA) to refer your complaint to The Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.



Contact Details Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD)

Headquarters
Room 513
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 3SB

Telephone No. **028 9052 0100**

Help line No. **028 9052 4999**

Text-phone No. **028 9052 4420**

(Can only be dialled from another text-phone)

Fax No. **028 9052 5546**

Email: dardhelpline@dardni.gov.uk

Or visit our website -
<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/>

This leaflet can be made available in other formats and languages on request (use contact details above).



Department of
Agriculture and
Rural Development
www.dardni.gov.uk

IN IRISH

Talmhataochta agus
Forbartha Tuaithe

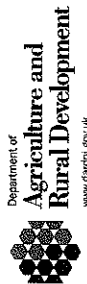
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RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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DMS 04.05.192



Our Complaints Procedure



Department of
Agriculture and
Rural Development
www.dardni.gov.uk

Our Commitment

We are an organisation committed to providing our customers with high quality standards of service. We welcome your comments on the quality of service you received and your suggestions on how we can improve our service.

Complaints

Please tell us if you are unhappy with the quality of our service.

We will look at your complaint in a positive way, dealing with it as quickly as possible. We will fully and fairly investigate your complaint, keep you informed of progress, offer a full explanation of the circumstances and take appropriate action.

We also want to know how we can put things right. We therefore want to learn from our mistakes so that we can improve the quality of the service we provide to you.

Please note this complaints procedure does not include appeals about Departmental decisions nor does it include matters of policy or legislation which are the direct responsibility of the Minister.

1 2 3

How you make a complaint

You can make a complaint in person, by letter, by fax, by e-mail, by telephone or by text-phone. It is important when contacting us, that you provide as much information as possible. This will assist us in investigating your complaint quickly and efficiently.

We will deal with complaints in the following way:

• Step 1 – Initial complaint

The first thing you should do is contact the officer with whom you were dealing with or the local manager and give them details of your complaint. They are best placed to deal with your complaint quickly.

You will find contact details on any correspondence issued, or in the Yellow Pages under 'Government Offices', 'Department of Agriculture & Rural Development'.

• Step 2 – Your complaint has been investigated but you are still not satisfied

If you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint, you can refer the matter to a senior manager who has not previously been involved in the matter and who will investigate your complaint. We will give you their name and address in our response to your initial complaint.

• Step 3 – Still not satisfied, what can I do?

If you feel that the senior manager has not responded to your complaint satisfactorily, you can write to the Permanent Secretary (or the Chief Executive in the Agencies) who will oversee a further investigation of your complaint. He will be assisted in this by a panel including a person independent from the Department. The reply you receive from the senior manager will tell you whom to contact.

How quickly will we deal with your complaint?

At each step of the process we will endeavour to:

- Acknowledge all written complaints within 3 working days of receipt; and
- Provide a full response to both verbal and written complaints within 15 working days of receipt.

If it is not possible to provide a full response to you within 15 working days, we will let you know why and tell you when you can expect a full response.

If we are responsible

Although we do everything we can to get things right, occasionally we may get things wrong. If this happens, we will:

- Explain what has gone wrong
- Apologise for our mistake
- Take appropriate action to put things right.