



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY REPORT 2021-22**

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## Section 1 – Background to the Complaints Policy

- 1.1 The Assembly Commission, in common with other public bodies, provides a method for members of the public to make a complaint about Assembly Commission staff, services and/or perceived failures in complying with the Assembly Commission’s Equality Scheme.
- 1.2 The Complaints Policy, which is published on the Assembly website, lists the type of complaints that may be made. These are:
- Our failure to provide a service;
  - Inadequate standard of service;
  - Assembly Commission policies; and
  - Treatment by or attitude of a member of Assembly Commission staff.

The Policy also makes clear the issues that will not be considered under it. These are:

- Decisions of the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- MLAs or their staff;
- Executive Ministers;
- Executive Departmental policy; or
- The merits of decisions taken by the Assembly Commission acting within its legal powers.

## Section 2 – Complaints received by the Northern Ireland Assembly

- 2.1 For the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 there was one admissible complaint. A summary of the investigation and response is set out in the following table.

Date	Complaint	Action	Date Resolved
04/06/2021	<p>Complaint made under ‘failure to provide a service’.</p> <p>The complainant was unhappy that a male member of staff contacted them when they requested a response from a female or female transgender member.</p>	<p>The complaint was investigated by a senior member of staff unconnected with the matter. The investigation found that while the complainant may request information under FOI, they may not prescribe the person who provides this information. As well, the investigating officer informed the complainant that the Information Standards (FOI) office was staffed at that time by two men. Finally, the complainant was informed that any future request for a response by a female or</p>	<p>Response sent on 25/06/2021.</p> <p>No further communication.</p>

Date	Complaint	Action	Date Resolved
		transgender female would not be facilitated.	

### Section 3 – Conclusions

- 3.1 The fact that there was only one admissible complaint during this period pays tribute to the efforts of the Assembly Commission to ensure that services are delivered fairly and transparently.
- 3.2 The Assembly Commission continues to endeavour to provide high quality and professional services for the public and minimise the number of complaints received.
- 3.3 As highlighted in this report, the sole complaint was not upheld. The complaint arose due to an unusual request for a specific person/type of person to convey the information requested through FOI. It would not be possible for the Assembly Commission to facilitate this type of request and the complainant was informed that this request would not be facilitated in the future.
- 3.4 While it is unlikely that such a request will reoccur, consideration might be given to including a statement within the FOI request information. This might state that any applicant cannot ask for specific people to respond to their request.