

Code of Practice for Complaints Handling

Introduction

At the Houses of the Oireachtas we aim to deliver a high quality, engaging and relevant service to our audience. We also aim to ensure that our programming is compliant with the requirements set out in the Broadcasting Act 2009 as amended by the [Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022](#).

At the Houses of the Oireachtas we welcome and will engage with all feedback, both negative and positive, from our viewers, listeners and followers concerning any aspect of our service.

We are obliged under the Broadcasting Act 2009 as amended, to have in place a Code of Practice for handling complaints from our audience. This Code of Practice sets out and explains our complaint process and ensures that we deal with complaints in an effective and efficient manner. Please note that the Code of Practice only relates to certain categories of complaints as detailed below.

1. What can I complain about?

As a broadcaster we have certain duties under the Broadcasting Act 2009 as amended. You may submit a complaint to us if you are of the opinion that a broadcast or part of a broadcast on our service has breached one or more of the obligations which we have under the following sections:

- **Section 46J:** Obligations include not to broadcast anything which may reasonably be regarded: as causing harm or undue offence; as likely to incite crime; or as tending to undermine the authority of the State;
- **Section 46K:** Ensuring that the privacy of an individual is not unreasonably encroached upon;
- **Section 46L:** Ensuring impartiality in presentation of news and current affairs;
- **Section 46N:** Complying with Media Service Codes made by Coimisiún na Meán;
- **Section 46O:** Complying with Media Service Rules made by Coimisiún na Meán;
- **Section 46P:** Retaining copies of all programme material for a period to be specified by Coimisiún na Meán.

2. How do I make a complaint?

If you are satisfied that your complaint is covered by this Code of Practice, you should submit the following details in writing (letter or email):

1. Your name and address;
2. The category of complaint (*please refer to the categories of complaints in 'What can I complain about?' above*);
3. The date and time of the broadcast;
4. The name of the programme which is the subject of your complaint; and
5. Details of exactly what, in the broadcast, concerned you.

If, by reason of disability or other good reason, you are unable to submit the complaint in writing, please contact us and we will assist you to do so.

Please note that we will not accept complaints that we deem to be of a frivolous or vexatious nature.

3. Where should I send my complaint?

You should submit your complaint to the following address:

**Broadcasting and Channel Manager,
Oireachtas Broadcasting Unit,
Ground Floor, Kildare House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2**
Email: broadcastingqueries@oireachtas.ie

4. What will happen to my complaint?

Once we have accepted your complaint, we will work to resolve the issue/s as soon as possible. Your complaint will be carefully considered, investigated if necessary, and responded to in writing.

- We will write to you to acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days.
- We will consider the issues raised in your complaint.
- We will watch or listen to the broadcast item identified in your complaint.
- Where appropriate, we will consult with any party to which your complaint relates, and give that party an opportunity to provide observations and comments in relation to the issues raised by you.
- We will provide a response to your complaint which will, as far as possible, address all of the issues/concerns you have raised.
- We will set out the reasons for our decision.

This response will be sent to you within **15 working days** from receipt of your complaint.

5. The role of Coimisiún na Meán

Coimisiún na Meán's role is to regulate broadcasters and online media. If we for any reason we have not responded to your complaint within 15 working days or if you are not satisfied with our response, you can refer your complaint to Coimisiún na Meán. You have 14 days from the date of response or the date a response was due, to refer your complaint. An Coimisiún will consider the complaint and may carry out an independent review of the complaint and our response.

A referral to Coimisiún na Meán can be made as follows:

- Via email: usersupport@cnam.ie.
- Via Post:
Coimisiún na Meán,
1 Shelbourne Buildings
Shelbourne Road
Dublin 4
D04 NP20

Further queries concerning complaint referrals may also be directed to the user support centre's telephone contact: (01) 963 7755.

Further information concerning Coimisiún na Meán's role in broadcast regulation can be found on their website: <https://www.cnam.ie/broadcasting/>.

6. Record of complaints

We are required under the Broadcasting Act, 2009 as amended by the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022 to keep a record of all complaints submitted in accordance with this Code of Practice for two years. We are also obliged to provide these records to Coimisiún na Meán if requested. Our records will include copies of your complaint, our response/s and copies of the broadcast material complained of.