

# Procedure for Managing Data Protection Complaints

**Purpose:** This procedure explains how NESO receives, records, investigates, responds to and learns from data protection complaints. It is aligned with the Information Commissioner's Office guidance on handling data protection complaints and supports the legal requirement for organisations to have a process for handling such complaints.

**Scope:** This procedure applies to complaints from individuals about how their personal data has been handled, including complaints about data subject rights requests, accuracy, retention, security, data breaches, data sharing, transparency, profiling or other data protection concerns.

## 1. Definition of a Data Protection Complaint

A data protection complaint is a complaint from an individual who considers that NESO has handled their personal data in a way that infringes data protection law. This may include complaints about how personal data has been collected, used, disclosed, retained, secured, profiled or otherwise processed, or about how NESO has handled a data subject rights request.

Complaints do not need to use specific wording or refer to data protection law to be valid. The substance of the concern and whether the individual is expressing dissatisfaction about the handling of their personal data should be considered. If it is unclear whether the individual is making a data protection complaint, clarification should be sought.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

- **All employees and contractors:** recognise potential data protection complaints and forward them promptly to the Data Protection Officer.
- **Data Protection Officer:** log and oversee the complaint, assess the issues, coordinate enquiries, advise on legal obligations, respond or approve the response where required, lead discussions to identify lessons learnt and recommend remedial actions.



- **Relevant directorate/team/business area:** provide information, evidence and explanation to support the investigation.
- **Senior management:** support escalation, approve remedial action and ensure lessons learned are implemented.
- **Data Protection Oversight Group:** work with the DPO to monitor and review complaints and complaints handling to ensure that systemic issues, patterns, trends, and lessons learnt are identified and that remedial actions are put in place.

### 3. Receiving and Logging a Complaint

NESO must give people a clear way to make data protection complaints directly. Complaints may be received via [informationrights@neso.energy](mailto:informationrights@neso.energy) and through the data protection complaints form which is linked to NESO's privacy notices. Data protection complaints may also be received via other NESO complaint channels, email, post, telephone, online forms, live chat, social media, in person or any other route used by the individual. NESO employees must accept complaints however they are received and must forward potential data protection complaints promptly to the Data Protection Officer ([informationrights@neso.energy](mailto:informationrights@neso.energy)).

Each complaint must be recorded in the data protection complaints log as soon as practicable. The log should include the date received, complainant details, channel received, summary of the complaint, relevant rights or processing issues, owner, due dates, progress updates, enquiries made, outcome, remedial action and any lessons learned.

### 4. Acknowledgement

NESO must acknowledge receipt of a data protection complaint within 30 days of receiving it. Where possible, acknowledgement should be sent sooner. The 30 days start the day after the complaint is received (regardless of whether this day falls on a weekend or public holiday). If the last day to acknowledge the complaint falls on a weekend or public holiday, we have until the next working day to provide an acknowledgement.

The acknowledgement should confirm that the complaint has been received, explain the process, provide a point of contact, outline expected timescales and request any additional information needed to assess or investigate the matter. Where a complaint is



submitted via social media, an alternative contact method should normally be requested as a response on social media is not a secure way of providing information. If complaints are received verbally, verbal acknowledgement should be given and then followed up in writing.

## 5. Initial Assessment

The DPO will assess whether the matter is a data protection complaint, a service complaint, a data subject rights request, a personal data breach, or a combination of these. Where a complaint is made by someone acting on behalf of another person, reasonable checks should be completed to confirm their authority to act. Where identity verification is needed, NESO should ask only for information that is reasonable and necessary. Service complaints which do not relate to data protection requirements will be directed to the Customer Team to manage.

## 6. Investigation

NESO must take appropriate steps to respond to the complaint without undue delay. This includes making appropriate enquiries, gathering relevant records, speaking to staff involved, reviewing policies and procedures, considering applicable legal obligations and assessing whether NESO handled the personal data appropriately. The investigation should be fair, thorough and proportionate.

If the complaint is unclear in any way, further information should be sought from the complainant as quickly as possible to avoid delays. It may also be appropriate to ask the complainant what outcome they are looking for as this may help to narrow down the scope of the investigation.

The complainant must be kept informed of the progress of the complaint without undue delay, particularly where the investigation is complex, requires input from several teams or is likely to take longer than expected.

## 7. Outcome and Response

NESO will inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation without undue delay. The response should clearly address each issue raised, explain the findings, set out any corrective action, apologise where appropriate and explain that the individual may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office if they remain dissatisfied. Responses will normally be in writing, but other appropriate communications should be



considered to resolve the complaint promptly and effectively, and to meet equality legislation requirements.

## **8. Escalation**

Complaints should be escalated to the Data Protection Officer and senior management where they involve significant risk, repeated issues, potential regulatory attention, media interest, complex legal questions, vulnerable individuals, children's data, special category data or potential personal data breaches.

Where a complaint also suggests a personal data breach, the breach response procedure must be followed in parallel. This includes considering whether the breach is notifiable to the Information Commissioner's Office and whether affected individuals must be informed.

## **9. Record Keeping**

All records relating to the complaint must be retained in line with the NESO's retention schedule. Records should include the complaint, acknowledgement, investigation notes, evidence reviewed, decisions made, response issued, remedial action and closure date. Records must be stored securely and accessed only by those who need them.

Complaint records should demonstrate that NESO acknowledged the complaint within the required timeframe, undertook an appropriate investigation, kept the complainant informed and provided the outcome without undue delay.

## **10. Learning and Continuous Improvement**

The DPO and the Data Protection Oversight Group should periodically review complaints to identify trends, root causes and opportunities to improve policies, training, systems and communications. Lessons learned should be recorded and tracked until completed.

Trends and lessons learned should be used to improve privacy notices, complaint routes, staff training, data subject rights handling, records management, security controls and other relevant data protection practices.



## 11. Review of This Procedure

This procedure should be reviewed every two years, or sooner if there are changes to data protection law, regulatory guidance, organisational structure, systems or complaint trends.

Version	Update	Date	Author
V 1.0	Issued	19/06/2026	DPO