Lump Sum Grant Independent Complaints Handling Committee

Mechanism for Handling Complaints

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating subvented welfare services are required to properly supervise and monitor the operation and service performance of their service units to ensure compliance with the relevant Funding and Service Agreements. Lump Sum Grant (LSG) related complaints against NGOs / subvented service units should first be handled promptly by the relevant NGOs in accordance with their established policies. Under the prevailing mechanism, the Lump Sum Grant Independent Complaints Handling Committee (ICHC) is responsible for handling LSG-related complaints that cannot be satisfactorily resolved at NGO level.

Ambit of the ICHC

2. The ICHC is composed of non-governmental independent members appointed by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare. It is responsible for handling LSG-related complaints that cannot be satisfactorily resolved at NGO level, such as misuse of subvention by the NGOs, the NGOs' management decisions that have a direct impact on service performance and instances of non-compliance with service requirements by the NGOs. In addition, the ICHC will relay its decisions and recommendations on LSG-related complaints to Social Welfare Department (SWD) for taking follow-up actions as appropriate. The ICHC may also suggest improvements to the LSG Subvention System where appropriate. SWD staff are responsible for supporting the ICHC Secretariat, including gathering information in accordance with the established mechanism and the ICHC's instructions, as well as investigating complaints or making complaint referrals. After deliberating on a complaint, the ICHC will instruct its Secretariat to reply to the complainant and to inform the relevant NGOs and SWD of the outcome of the complaint.

Complaints outside the ambit of the ICHC

3. The ICHC does not handle the following complaints:

(a) complaints that are not LSG-related or that are made against non-LSG-subvented NGOs/service units;

(b) complaints that are LSG-related but have yet to be dealt with by the NGOs concerned;

(c) complaints about incidents that the complainants have had knowledge for two years or more (the complaints will be referred to the NGOs concerned for information and/or follow-up);

(d) complaints that are of the same nature/substance as those previously handled by the ICHC;

(e) complaints in respect of which legal proceedings have commenced;

(f) complaints that fall within the regulatory scope of other ordinances or statutory requirements;

(g) complaints that fall within the ambit of other official authorities;

(h) complaints that fall within the ambit of other government bureaux/departments;

(i) complaints about the handling of individual cases/professional judgement, or the performance/attitude of staff; and

(j) complaints that are malicious, trivial, or vexatious in nature.

Complaints/Information not to be referred to the NGOs for follow-up

4. The following complaints/information may not be referred to the NGOs for follow-up:

(a) complaints that are flimsy, ambiguous, or lacking sufficient information. The complainant may be asked to provide more specific information before a referral to the NGO concerned is considered;

(b) complaints based on hearsay. The complainant may be asked to arrange for the person with first-hand information (e.g. the aggrieved party) to provide information directly to the ICHC; and

(c) information or messages that are irrelevant to the complaints, or that are blatantly insulting or constitute personal attacks against NGO staff. The ICHC will not relay such content to the NGOs concerned/other parties.

Complaints to be referred to other authorities or SWD units for follow-up

5. For complaints that fall within the purview of units under SWD, other government departments, or other authorities (including the Hong Kong Police Force, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong), the ICHC will, having regard to the nature of each complaint and the findings of its investigation, refer the case to the relevant departments or authorities, or assist the complainant in contacting them for follow-up with the relevant complainant's consent. However, to ensure the safety of those involved and safeguard public interest, the ICHC may refer cases involving criminal offences, or child/ elder abuse, directly to the relevant authorities without the complainant's consent.

Lodging a complaint

6. When lodging a complaint, the complainant should clearly set out the relevant particulars and provide true and accurate information to facilitate the ICHC's efficient deliberations. Under the existing mechanism, the complainant may lodge a complaint through any of the three modes set out below. To ensure the rigour of the complaint-handling process and fairness to both the complainant and the NGO concerned, the ICHC will disclose the progress of follow-up actions and the outcome of its deliberations to the complainant only if his/her identity has been verified.

(a) Named complaints

The complainant is required to lodge his/her complaint against the NGO or its service unit(s) with the ICHC in writing, or by completing the prescribed Complaint Form (see Annex). The complainant must provide his/her name as shown on his/her identity documents, as well as his/her correspondence/email address to facilitate communication and follow-up.

(b) Complaints with personal information withheld from the NGO concerned

Under special circumstances, the complainant may request the ICHC to refer his/her complaint to the NGO for handling without disclosing his/her personal information, and to receive the NGO's reply through the Secretariat for ICHC. Nevertheless, the complainant is

still required to provide his/her name as shown on his/her identity documents, as well as his/her correspondence/email address to facilitate communication and follow-up.

(c) Anonymous complaints

If the complainant (1) has not provided his/her personal and contact information; (2) has not confirmed the details of his/her complaint with the Secretariat for ICHC; or (3) has consistently failed to ascertain the intention to lodge a complaint, his/her complaint will be treated as anonymous and handled as follows:

i. If the ICHC considers that the complaint warrants further action (typically cases involving (1) misuse of subvention by NGOs; (2) abuse or injury of service users; (3) non-compliance with service requirements by NGOs; or (4) decisions made by NGO management that directly impact service performance, etc.), the Secretariat for ICHC will, after removing all personally identifiable information (PII) of the complainant, refer the complaint to the NGO concerned for follow-up. The NGO concerned is required to submit a report regarding the complaint to the ICHC within four weeks.

ii. For anonymous complaints, it may not be necessary for the NGO concerned to reply to the complainant, and the ICHC will not disclose the details of any follow-up actions and the outcome of its deliberations to an anonymous complainant.

iii. If the removal of PII causes the details of an anonymous complaint to become disjointed, the ICHC may consider not referring the case or taking any follow-up action.

General investigation

7. The Secretariat for ICHC will normally contact the complainant within 10 working days after receiving a completed Complaint Form or a referral from other government departments/authorities. If the complaint has not been previously handled by the NGO concerned, the Secretariat for ICHC will, with the complainant's consent, forward the confirmed complaint details, together with the complainant's name and contact information, to the NGO concerned for initial handling. The NGO will directly reply to the complainant

(applicable to named complaints only), with a copy of its reply forwarded to the ICHC. If the complainant refuses to disclose his/her personal information to the NGO concerned, he/she may receive the NGO's reply through the Secretariat for ICHC.

8. If the NGO concerned has already provided the complainant with a detailed reply by the time the complaint is lodged with the ICHC, the NGO is required to submit that reply to the ICHC for review, in order to assess whether further follow-up action is warranted.

9. For LSG-related complaints that are not detrimental to the interests of the complainant, or that are not urgent or serious in nature, the ICHC may extend the time limit for initiating the complaint-handling process. Generally, the grace period is about three months.

10. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the NGO's handling of or reply to the complaint, and the grounds for such dissatisfaction fall within the ambit of the ICHC, the complainant must submit a written request to the ICHC for follow-up within one month from the date of receiving the NGO's reply. The Secretariat for ICHC will request supplementary information related to the complaint from the NGO as necessary, such as policies/procedures/guidelines on service quality standards, as well as records relevant to the complaint, etc. The Secretariat for ICHC will also obtain the relevant service requirements/specifications from the respective service branches of SWD. Generally, the gathered information will be deliberated at the next ICHC meeting. The ICHC will authorise its Secretariat to notify the complainant (anonymous complaints are excluded), the NGO concerned, and SWD in writing of the outcome of its deliberations, as well as recommendations for improvement (if any), so that SWD may monitor the NGO's service performance in accordance with established mechanisms (where applicable).

Full investigation

11. If the ICHC decides to launch a full investigation into a particular complaint, the NGO concerned is required to submit the relevant information and documents to the ICHC within four weeks. For more complex cases, the NGO concerned may need more time to prepare the relevant information.

12. Upon receipt of the relevant information, the responsible Investigation Officer of the ICHC will visit the NGO/service unit(s) concerned and/or interview/contact relevant staff member(s) and/or service user(s) to collect information and/or feedback. The investigation will typically be completed within three months, and the case will be deliberated at the next ICHC meeting.

13. The ICHC will authorise its Secretariat to notify the complainant (anonymous complaints are excluded), the NGO concerned, and SWD in writing of the outcome of its deliberations, as well as recommendations for improvement (if any), so that SWD may monitor the NGO's service performance in accordance with established mechanisms (where applicable). The ICHC may also suggest other improvement measures to the NGO concerned with a view to enhancing service quality.

14. The ICHC may, where necessary, invite the complainant and/or representatives of the NGO concerned to attend a "case meeting". The panel for the "case meeting" consists of the Chairperson/Vice-chairperson and two rotating members (if applicable) of the ICHC.

15. Should the complainant or the NGO concerned refuse to co-operate, the progress of the ICHC's investigation may be hindered. Depending on the actual circumstances at the time, the ICHC will determine the appropriate course of action, which may include making a determination or terminating the investigation based on the available information, or referring the complaint to SWD as appropriate.

Application for review

16. If the complainant or the NGO concerned is dissatisfied with the outcome of the ICHC's deliberations, they may apply in writing for a review within one month from the date of the ICHC's outcome letter. The application should include justifications for the review along with any new information relevant to the complaint.

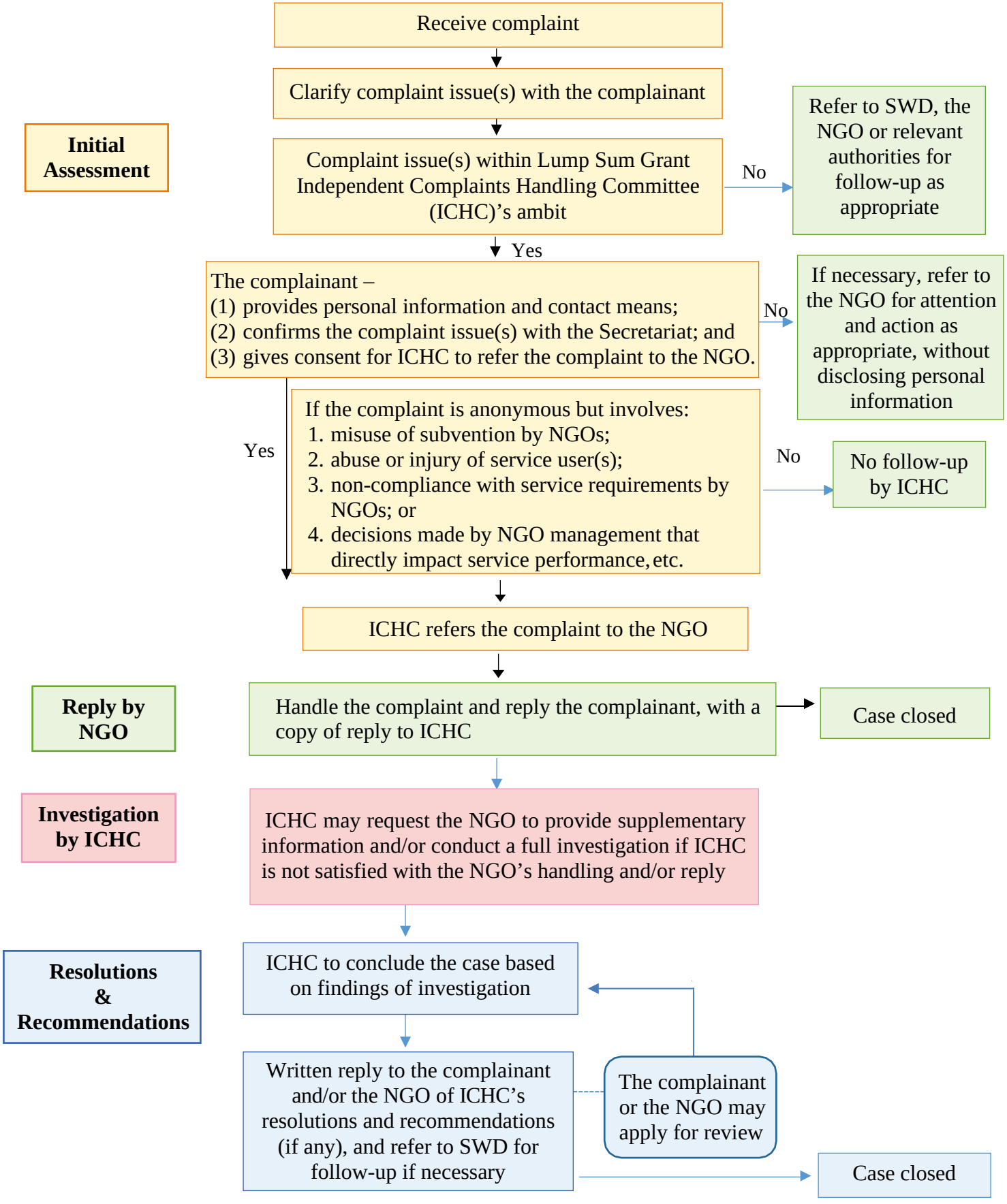
17. The ICHC will consider the review application after examining the investigation findings, as well as the justifications and new information provided by the NGO concerned/the complainant. The NGO concerned/the complainant will be notified of the ICHC's decision following the review. The ICHC's decision is final. A second review will only be granted if there are sufficient justifications.

Handling of complaint information

18. To uphold the principle of confidentiality, the ICHC will not disclose any information related to a complaint to any person without consent of the complainant and the NGO concerned, unless there are sufficient legal grounds or special reasons to do so.

Lump Sum Grant Independent Complaints Handling Committee
September 2026 (Revised)

Lump Sum Grant Independent Complaints Handling Committee
Flowchart of Handling Complaints



Print Reset

ICHC reference ：_____
Date of receipt by Secretariat for ICHC ：_____

Lump Sum Grant Independent Complaints Handling Committee Complaint Form

Telephone: 2116 3285
Fax : 2116 0746
Address : 38/F, Dah Sing Financial Centre, 248 Queen's Road East, Wanchai, Hong Kong
Secretariat for ICHC
Email : ichceng@swd.gov.hk
Website : https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/ngo/subventions/comp/ichc/

Please read the "**Notes for Lodging Complaint**" carefully before completing this form.
All fields must be filled, unless otherwise specified.
With insufficient information, the ICHC may consider handling the complaint as anonymous one.

Part I: Particulars of the Complainant

Name of complainant#：
（English）--Please Select-- _____ **（Chinese）** _____ --Please Select--
（Note: Please provide full name as in identity document）
Correspondence/ Email address： _____
_____ **Telephone No.** *（optional）*：_____
Name of person concerned：*（if applicable）*
（English）--Please Select-- _____ **（Chinese）** _____ --Please Select--
Relationship with the complainant：*（if applicable）* _____

Please ✓ the following blanket *（if applicable）*
☐ The complainant has been authorised by the person concerned to lodge the complaint.
☐ The complainant requests the Secretariat for ICHC to refer the complaint to the relevant NGO without disclosing his/her personal data, and to receive the NGO's reply via the Secretariat for ICHC.

#The complainant must be the person concerned/authorised representative/legal guardian of the person concerned (applicable to minors or Mentally Incapacitated Persons).

Part II: Complaint Details

Organisation(s)/Service Unit(s) being complained： _____

Complaint Content：*(Please describe the incident concerned and provide all relevant information. Use additional sheets as necessary for additional contents and/or complaint issue(s). Please attach copies of relevant documents and correspondence exchanged with the organisation(s)/service unit(s).)*

Complaint issue（1）:
Complaint issue（2）:
Complaint issue（3）:

Notes for Lodging Complaint:

1. The Lump Sum Grant Independent Complaints Handling Committee (ICHC) handles Lump Sum Grant (LSG) - related complaints that cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
2. Complainant is required to fill in the complaint form to provide the ICHC with details of his/her complaint contents, his/her name as shown in his/her identity document, and his/her correspondence/email address to facilitate communication and follow-up.
3. The complainant consents:
   (a) the ICHC copying this complaint form / referring the complaint contents and any other information provided by the complainant, including the personal data, to any party concerned for the purpose of processing this complaint (please see Note 4 below); and
   (b) any party concerned providing the personal and other relevant information of the complainant/person concerned to facilitate the ICHC's processing of this complaint.
4. The complainant/person concerned may be required to sign a separate consent form when the ICHC considers it necessary or as requested by the NGO concerned.
5. All personal data and information are submitted on voluntary basis and will be used by the ICHC to provide appropriate service, including but not limited to the handling of this complaint. The complainant has the right to request access to and correction of personal data in accordance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (PD(P)O). For access to personal data in accordance with the PD(P)O, please complete the "Data Access Request

Form OPS003" which is specified by the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data and be submitted to the Secretary of ICHC. The complainant may contact the Secretariat for ICHC or download the form available at: https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/svcdesk/accinfo/personalda/.

6. When lodging a complaint, the complainant should clearly set out the relevant particulars and provide true and accurate information to facilitate the ICHC's efficient deliberations. Under the existing mechanism, the complainant may lodge a complaint through 'named complaints', 'complaints with personal information withheld from the NGO concerned' or 'anonymous complaints'. To ensure the rigour of the complaint-handling process and fairness to both the complainant and the NGO concerned, the ICHC will disclose the progress of follow-up actions and the outcome of its deliberations to the complainant only if his/her identity has been verified.

7. If the complaint has not been previously handled by the NGO concerned, the Secretariat for ICHC will, with the complainant's consent, forward the confirmed complaint details, together with the complainant's name and contact information, to the NGO concerned for initial handling. The NGO will directly reply to the complainant (applicable to named complaints only), with a copy of its reply forwarded to the ICHC. If the complainant refuses to disclose his/her personal information to the NGO concerned, he/she may receive the NGO's reply through the Secretariat for ICHC. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the NGO's handling of or reply to the complaint, and the grounds for such dissatisfaction fall within the ambit of the ICHC, the complainant must submit a written request to the ICHC for follow-up within one month from the date of receiving the NGO's reply.

8. If the complainant (1) has not provided his/her personal and contact information; (2) has not confirmed the details of his/her complaint with the Secretariat for ICHC; or (3) has consistently failed to ascertain the intention to lodge a complaint, his/her complaint will be treated as anonymous.

9. If the ICHC considers that the complaint warrants further action (typically cases involving (1) misuse of subvention by NGOs; (2) abuse or injury of service users; (3) non-compliance with service requirements by NGOs; or (4) decisions made by NGO management that directly impact service performance, etc.), the Secretariat for ICHC will, after removing all personally identifiable information (PII) of the complainant, refer the complaint to the NGO concerned for follow-up. The NGO concerned is required to submit a report regarding the complaint to the ICHC within four weeks.

10. For anonymous complaints, it may not be necessary for the NGO concerned to reply to the complainant, and the ICHC will not disclose the details of any follow-up actions and the outcome of its deliberations to an anonymous complainant.

11. If the removal of PII causes the details of an anonymous complaint to become disjointed, the ICHC may consider not referring the case or taking any follow-up action.

12. For details of the mechanism for complaints handling and ambit of the ICHC, please visit the website of the ICHC (https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/ngo/subventions/comp/ichc/).

I, being the complainant, acknowledge the content of the above Notes and consent to refer the complaint to the NGO concerned for follow-up and reply.

Signature : _____

Name : _____ **Date :** _____