



PROPERTY
SOURCING
COMPLIANCE

[YOUR COMPANY NAME] COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

1. Definitions

1.1 In this Complaints Policy the following expressions have the following meanings:

“Appeal”	Refers to your request to escalate a Complaint from Stage One to Stage Two if you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage One;
“Appeal Handler”	Refers to an employee of [Your Company Name Here] working at Director level who will handle Stage Two Complaints;
“Business Day”	Refers to, any day (other than Saturday or Sunday) on which ordinary banks are open for their full range of normal business in UK;
“Complaint”	Refers to a Complaint about the service provided by [Enter company name here], about our customer service, or about our staff;
“Complaint Handler”	Refers to a member of staff of [Enter company name here] working at Director level who will handle Stage One Complaints;
“Complaints Policy”	Refers to our Customer Complaints Policy, of [Enter company name here] which is followed when handling a Complaint and is available by contacting the company office (Tel: [Enter number here]), providing your details and a copy will be posted or emailed to you;
“Complaints Reference”	Refers to a unique code assigned to a Complaint that will be used to track the Complaint;
“Customer”	Refers to a service user of (your company name here);
“Data Protection Policy”	Refers to our Data Protection Policy, available upon request;
“Outcome Letter”	Refers to a letter sent by a Complaint Handler or Appeal Handler to a Customer informing that Customer of the outcome of their Complaint at Stage One;

“External Resolution”	Refers to the referral by a Customer of a Complaint to an external redress scheme for resolution if that Customer is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage Two;
“Final Viewpoint Letter”	Refers to a letter sent by a Complaint Handler or Appeal Handler to a Customer informing that Customer of the outcome of their Complaint at Stage Two;
“Investigation Report”	Refers to the report prepared by a Complaint Handler or Appeal Handler detailing his/her investigation;
“Stage One”	Refers to the first stage in our Complaints Handling Procedure under which Complaints will be handled by a Complaint Handler;
“Stage Two”	Refers to the second stage in our Complaints Handling Procedure under which a Customer may appeal the outcome of a Stage One Complaint and under which Complaints will be handled by an Appeal Handler;
“Professional Body”	Refers to [Your Redress Scheme Name]
“Resolution Action”	Refers to the available actions to be taken in response to a Complaint as detailed in Section 8.

2. What this Complaints Handling Procedure Covers

- 2.1** This Complaints Handling Procedure applies to Complaints pertaining to the provision of services by [Your Company Name Here], our Customer service and to our staff.
- 2.2** For the purposes of this Complaints Policy, any reference to [Enter company name here] also includes our employees, agents and subcontractors.
- 2.3** Complaints may relate to any of our activities and may include (but are not limited to):
 - 2.3.1** The quality of our Customer service;
 - 2.3.2** The behaviour and/or professional competence of our staff;



2.4 The following do not constitute complaints. Customers raising such questions or matters should be directed to the appropriate person:

2.4.1 General questions about our services;

2.4.2 Matters concerning contractual or other legal disputes;

2.4.3 Formal requests for the disclosure of information including, but not limited to, those made under the Data Protection Act;

3. Receipt and Recording of Complaints

3.1 Customers may make Complaints to [Your Company Name Here] using any of the following methods:

3.1.1 In writing, addressed to [Your Contact Name and Address];

3.1.2 Or by email, addressed to [Contact Name & Email Address];

3.2 Upon receipt of Complaints, the following steps should be taken within 3 Business Days:

3.2.1 If a written Complaint is received by post, [Name of Contact] must acknowledge receipt of the Complaint;

3.2.2 If a written Complaint is received by email, [Name of Contact] must acknowledge receipt of the Complaint;

3.2.3 If a Complaint is made by telephone, the person receiving the call must request that the Complaint be submitted in writing to [Name of Contact] either via post or email – Contact details for either to be provided. The person receiving the call must also inform [Name of Contact] of the 'Verbal Complaint' and complete and submit a company Complaint Form to [him/her];

3.3 All Complaints must be given a Complaint Reference Number and forwarded to an appropriate Complaint Handler, selected in accordance with Section 6.1, within 1 Business Day.

3.4 All Complaints must be acknowledged, in writing, within 3 Business Days of receipt by Director. The acknowledgement should inform the Customer of their Complaint Reference Number, their assigned Complaint Handler and should include copies of [Your Company Name Here]. Customer Complaint Policy & this Complaints Handling Procedure.



4. Complaint Information

- 4.1** Customers are advised in our Complaints Policy that the following information should be provided in as much detail as is reasonably possible when making a Complaint:
- 4.1.1** The Customer's name, address, telephone number and email address, indicating any preferred method of communication;
 - 4.1.2** If the Customer is being represented by a third party, the information set out in Section 4.1.1 should be provided in reference to both parties;
 - 4.1.3** If the Complaint relates to a particular property, the property details;
 - 4.1.4** If the Complaint relates to a particular member of staff, the name and, where appropriate, position of that person;
 - 4.1.5** Further details of the Complaint including, as appropriate, all times, dates, events and people involved;
 - 4.1.6** Details of any documents or other evidence on which the Customer wishes to rely in support of the Complaint;
 - 4.1.7** Details of how the Customer would like [Your Company Name Here] to resolve the Complaint. Whilst we undertake to make all reasonable efforts to accommodate such requests, however, we are not bound to take any action beyond that which we may be contractually or otherwise legally obliged to take.
- 4.2** If the information detailed in Section 4.1 is missing, insufficiently detailed, or incomplete, the Complaint Handler should contact the Customer within 3 Business Days of being assigned to the Complaint to request further information.

5. Complaint Levels

- 5.1** [Your Company Name Here] operates a Two Stage Complaints Handling Procedure. Upon receipt, all new Complaints should be handled in accordance with the Stage One procedure set out in Section 6 below. It is our policy to use all reasonable endeavours to resolve all Complaints to Customers' satisfaction at Stage One.
- 5.2** If a Customer is not satisfied with the resolution of their Complaint at Stage One, he/she may request that the Complaint is escalated to Stage Two in the form of an Appeal at which point the Complaint should be handled in accordance with the Stage Two procedure set out in Section 7 below.



- 5.3** If a Customer is not satisfied with the resolution of their Complaint at Stage Two, he/she has the option of referring the matter for External Resolution as detailed in Section 9 below.

6. Stage One Complaints

- 6.1** The following staff members are qualified and eligible Complaint Handlers for Level One Complaints:
- [Name], Director, email: [Email Address];
- [Name], Director, email: [Email Address];
- 6.2** Upon receipt of a Complaint, the Complaint Handler shall consider the Complaint and make a decision within two Business Days whether to:
- 6.2.1** Investigate the Complaint fully if it is considered to be valid, in which case the procedure should resume from Section 6.3; or
- 6.2.2** Dismiss the Complaint if it is considered to be invalid, in which case the Complaint Handler should inform the Customer of his/her decision in writing within 7 Business Days.
- 6.3** Subject to delays arising from circumstances beyond his/her reasonable control (including, but not limited to, delays in other persons responding to communications), the Complaint Handler shall have a period of 10 Business Days in which to fully investigate the Complaint and to decide upon appropriate Resolution Action(s).
- 6.4** If the Complaint relates to a particular staff member (a “Complaine”), the Complaint Handler shall inform the Complaine in question of the Complaint and arrange meetings or telephone calls as required to discuss the Complaint. In such cases, the Complaine should not, under any circumstances, contact the Customer directly regarding the Complaint. If the Customer contacts the Complaine directly regarding the Complaint (which they are requested not to do in our Complaints Policy), the Complaine should respectfully refuse to discuss the matter, referring the Customer to Section 5.2.3 of our Complaints Policy. Any such contact should be reported to the Complaint Handler.
- 6.5** If the Complaint Handler requires additional information or evidence in support of the Complaint, the Complaint Handler shall contact the Customer using the Customer’s preferred method of communication, stating clearly what information or evidence is required. Customers should be respectfully reminded that any delay in their response to such a request, might delay the resolution of their Complaint, as per Section 5.2.4 of our Complaints Policy.



- 6.6** If a Customer is unable or unwilling to provide information or evidence requested under Section 6.5, the Complaint Handler must nevertheless use all reasonable endeavours to resolve the Complaint. If, however, the Complaint Handler considers that it is not possible to uphold the Complaint in the absence of the requested information or evidence, he or she may close the Complaint and inform the Customer of the outcome in accordance with Sections 6.9 to 6.12.
- 6.7** The Complaint Handler shall examine and evaluate the Complaint, taking full account of all relevant statements, information, evidence and circumstances and shall maintain full objectivity and fairness at all times.
- 6.8** Subject to the exceptions in Section 6.8.1, During the investigation of the Complaint, the Complaint Handler shall have access to all records, information and staff that may be necessary to enable him/her to carry out an impartial and thorough investigation.
- 6.8.1** Access to the following records and/or information is restricted and shall require the authorisation of either [Name Director 1] or [Name Director 2]:
- a)** Complaints File – Both current & Archived;
 - b)** Employee Personal Files;
 - c)** Finance Information;
- 6.9** Following his/her examination of the Complaint, the Complaint Handler shall reach a decision within the time period set out in Section 6.3 (subject to the exceptions noted therein). Resolution Actions that may be chosen are set out in Section 8.
- 6.10** Upon reaching a decision, the Complaint Handler shall send an Investigation Report and Recommendation for review and authorisation by Director who shall be required to respond within 2 Business Days.
- 6.11** In the event that the Director does not agree with the Complaint Handler's decision and/or Recommendation under Section 6.10 he/she must give reasons for such disagreement and the Complaint Handler shall have a further 2 Business Days to revise his/her decision and/or Recommendation and resubmit it to the Director for review and authorisation. If, following resubmission, the Director still does not agree with the decision and/or Recommendation, the Director's preferred decision and/or Recommendation shall be final.



- 6.12** Upon reaching a decision under Section 6.9 or upon receiving approval or a final decision under Section 6.10 or 6.11, as applicable, the Complaint Handler shall send an Outcome Letter to the Customer by first class post or by email, as appropriate. Decision Letters shall set out the decision, the Resolution Action(s), and shall remind the Customer of their right to escalate the Complaint to Level Two. One copy of the Investigation Report and Decision Letter should be attached to the Complaint file.
- 6.13** If a delay either occurs or is considered likely to occur at any stage of the Stage One procedure, the Complaint Handler shall inform the Customer using the Customer's preferred communication method. The Customer should be informed of the length or likely length of the delay and the reasons therefor.
- 6.14** The Customer shall have a time limit of 14 Business Days within which to make an Appeal if he/she wishes to escalate the Complaint to Stage Two.
- 6.15** Upon receipt of an Appeal, the following steps should be taken within 3 Business Days by the Complaint Handler:
- 6.15.1** If a written Appeal is received by post, the Complaint Handler must inform the appropriate Director who will carry out the Stage Two process;
 - 6.15.2** If a written Appeal is received by email, the Complaint Handler must inform the appropriate Director who will carry out the Stage Two process;
 - 6.15.3** If an Appeal is made by telephone, the person receiving the call must request that the Appeal be submitted in writing to [Contact Name] either via post or email – Contact details for either to be provided. The person receiving the call must also inform [Contact Name] of the 'Verbal Complaint';
- 6.16** All Appeals must be forwarded to an appropriate Appeal Handler, selected in accordance with Section 7.1 within 1 Business Day.
- 6.17** All Appeals must be acknowledged in writing, within 3 Business Days of receipt by the responsible Director. The acknowledgement should inform the Customer of their assigned Appeal Handler.



7. Stage Two Complaints

- 7.1** The following staff members are qualified and eligible Appeal Handlers for Level Two Complaints:
- [Name], Director, email: [Email Address];
- [Name], Director, email: [Email Address];
- 7.2** Upon receipt of an Appeal, the Appeal Handler shall consider the Appeal and make a decision within 3 Business Days whether to:
- 7.2.1** Investigate the Complaint fully if it is considered to be valid, in which case the procedure should resume from Section 7.3; or
- 7.2.2** Dismiss the Complaint if it is considered to be invalid, in which case the Appeal Handler should inform the Customer of his/her decision in writing within 3 Business Days. If the Complaint is so dismissed, the Complaint may be dismissed in its entirety, or the Resolution Action from Stage One may stand.
- 7.3** Subject to delays arising from circumstances beyond his/her reasonable control (including, but not limited to, delays in other persons responding to communications), the Appeal Handler shall have a period of 10 Business Days in which to fully investigate the Complaint and to decide upon appropriate Resolution Action(s).
- 7.4** If the Complaint relates to a particular Complainee, the Appeal Handler shall inform the Complainee in question of the Appeal and arrange meetings or telephone calls as required to discuss the Complaint. In such cases, the Complainee should not, under any circumstances, contact the Customer directly regarding the Complaint. If the Customer contacts the Complainee directly regarding the Complaint (which they are requested not to do in our Complaints Policy), the Complainee should respectfully refuse to discuss the matter, referring the Customer to Section 5.3.3 of our Complaints Policy. Any such contact should be reported to the Appeal Handler.
- 7.5** If the Appeal Handler requires additional information or evidence in support of the Complaint, the Appeal Handler shall contact the Customer using the Customer's preferred method of communication, stating clearly what information or evidence is required. Customers should be respectfully reminded that any delay in their response to such a request might delay the resolution of their Complaint, as per Section 5.3.4 of our Complaints Policy.
- 7.6** If a Customer is unable or unwilling to provide information or evidence requested under Section 7.5, the Appeal Handler must nevertheless use all reasonable endeavours to resolve the Complaint. If, however, the Appeal Handler considers that it is not possible to uphold the Complaint in the absence of the requested information or evidence, he or she may close the Complaint and inform the Customer of the outcome in accordance with Sections 7.9 to 7.12.



- 7.7** The Appeal Handler shall examine and evaluate the Complaint, taking full account of all relevant statements, information, evidence and circumstances and shall maintain full objectivity and fairness at all times.
- 7.8** Subject to the exceptions in 7.8.1, during the investigation of the Complaint, the Appeal Handler shall have access to all records, information and staff that may be necessary to enable him/her to carry out an impartial and thorough investigation.
- 7.8.1** Access to the following records and/or information is restricted and shall require the authorisation of a Director:
- a)** Complaints File – Both current & Archived;
 - b)** Employee Personal Files;
 - c)** Finance Information;
- 7.9** Following his/her examination of the Complaint, the Appeal Handler shall reach a decision within the time period set out in Section 7.3 (subject to the exceptions noted therein). Resolution Actions that may be chosen that may be chosen are set out in Section 8.
- 7.10** Upon reaching a decision, the Appeal Handler shall send an Investigation Report and Recommendation for review and authorisation by an appropriate Director who shall be required to respond within 2 Business Days.
- 7.11** In the event that the appropriate Director does not agree with the Appeal Handler's decision and/or Recommendation under Section 7.10 he/she must give reasons for such disagreement and the Appeal Handler shall have a further 2 Business Days to revise his/her decision and/or Recommendation and resubmit it to the appropriate Director for review and authorisation. If, following resubmission, the appropriate Director still does not agree with the decision and/or Recommendation, the appropriate Director's preferred decision and/or Recommendation shall be final.
- 7.12** Upon reaching a decision under Section 7.9 or upon receiving approval or a final decision under Section 7.10 or 7.11, as applicable, the Appeal Handler shall send the Investigation Report and Final Viewpoint Letter to the Customer by first class post or by email, as appropriate. Decision Letters shall set out the decision and the Resolution Action(s). The Customer shall also be reminded of their right to seek External Resolution of their Complaint. One copy of the Investigation Report and Final Viewpoint Letter should be attached to the Complaints file.
- 7.13** If a delay either occurs or is considered likely to occur at any stage of the Stage Two procedure, the Appeal Handler shall inform the Customer using the Customer's preferred communication method. The Customer should be informed of the length or likely length of the delay and the reasons therefor.

8. Resolution Actions

When handling Complaints, Complaint Handlers and Appeal Handlers may select from the following Resolution Actions, as appropriate to the facts and circumstances of a Complaint:

- 8.1** Complaint unsubstantiated – Write to inform Customer of the reasons this conclusion has been arrived at giving details as to why;
- 8.2** Complaint partially upheld – Write to inform Customer of the reasons this conclusion has been arrived at – Be specific as to which aspects were upheld and which found to be unsubstantiated – Explain where the system failed and what changes have been implemented to prevent this in the future as well as including a full apology;
- 8.3** Complaint fully upheld - Write to inform Customer of the reasons this conclusion has been arrived at – Explain where the system failed and what changes have been implemented to prevent this in the future as well as including a full apology;
- 8.4** Partial refund of fees;
- 8.5** Complete refund of fees;

9. External Resolution

- 9.1** As [Your Company Name Here] is a member of [Name of Redress Scheme] Customers have the right to seek External Resolution of Complaints from that organisation if they are not satisfied with the outcome resulting from this Complaints Handling Procedure.
- 9.2** [Name of Redress Scheme] handles any and all such referrals in accordance with its own policies and procedures. In the event that a Customer refers their Complaint for External Resolution the appropriate representative(s) of [Name of Redress Scheme] may require contact with members of staff of [Your Company Name Here] and may require access to documents and information pertaining to a Complaint. Any and all such interactions between [Name Redress Scheme] and [Your Company Name Here] shall (unless otherwise authorised by a Director take place via:

[Name], Director, email: [Email Address];

[Name], Director, email: [Email Address];
- 9.3** Any and all requests made by [Redress Scheme Name] for evidence or information, whether written or oral, shall be answered without undue delay, subject to the approval and authorisation of a Director who shall ensure that said request is reasonable and pertinent given the nature of the Complaint.

10. Implementation of Resolution Actions

Upon the conclusion of a Complaint, whether at Stage One, Stage Two or by External Resolution, the Resolution Action(s) settled upon shall require implementation in a timely manner. Responsibility for the implementation of Resolution Actions ultimately lies with the following:

10.1 Resolution Actions pertaining to Customer service shall be the responsibility of:

[Name], Director, email: [Email Address];

10.2 Resolution Actions pertaining to the behaviour and/or professional competence of our staff shall be the responsibility of:

[Name], Director, email: [Email Address];

11. Recording of Resolution Actions

11.1 Upon the conclusion of a Complaint and the implementation of the applicable Resolution Action(s), the appropriate Director shall update the Complaint record with details of the resolution reached.

12. Confidentiality and Data Protection

12.1 All Complaints, Appeals, evidence and other information gathered, held and processed under this Complaints Handling Procedure shall be treated with the utmost confidence at all times. Such information may be shared with staff of [Your Company Name Here] only to the extent required to resolve the Complaint in question in accordance with this Complaints Handling Procedure.

12.2 In the event that the details of a Complaint are to be used for training or quality improvement purposes, in which case they will be shared with other staff of [Your Company Name Here] beyond the scope of this Complaints Handling Procedure, the relevant Customer's express permission must first be sought using that Customer's preferred contact method. Personal details (that is, anything that may be used to identify the Customer) shall be removed from all information so used. Such permission may be revoked at any time in accordance with the Customer's right to do so under Section 6.2 of our Customer Complaints Policy.

12.3 All personal information collected by [Your Company Name Here] (including, but not limited to, Customers' names and contact details) shall only be collected, used and held in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and our Customers' rights under that Act, as detailed and embodied in our Data Protection Policy (copy available upon request).



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13. Procedure Review and Responsibility

- 13.1** Overall responsibility for this Complaints Handling Procedure and the implementation thereof lies with [Name], Director.
- 13.2** This Complaints Handling Procedure shall be reviewed regularly at intervals of not more than 12 months and shall be updated as required.
- 13.3** This Complaints Handling Procedure was adopted on [Enter date here].
- 13.4** This Complaints Handling Procedure was last reviewed on [Enter date here].