

Complaints Procedure

1 Introduction

WWW-Webmaster Ltd is committed to providing the highest standards of services to its customers. Complaints play a role in maintaining and improving standards and the quality of service provided. When WWW-Webmaster Ltd receives a complaint, it is a unique opportunity for the organisation to have an important insight into how services are being delivered. The careful scrutiny of complaints will often point the way to actions that can be taken to improve services and help improve efficiency within WWW-Webmaster Ltd.

This procedure details the way in which complaints will be managed, investigated and acted upon within WWW-Webmaster Ltd.

2 Definition of a Complaint

A Complaint is:

“An expression of dissatisfaction with the services provided by an organisation or individual, whether verbal or written, that requires a response”.

Complainants may wish to discuss a concern (or worry) they may have in relation to WWW-Webmaster Ltd and the service it provides. However, as there is a very fine line between a complaint and a concern, it is advisable to give people the opportunity to decide if they wish the matter they are raising to be considered under WWW-Webmaster Ltd's Complaints Procedure, or to just express their concerns without exercising their right to follow the formal complaints route.

WWW-Webmaster Ltd recognises that complainants want their views acknowledged and actions taken. Their intention is often to suggest how things can be improved or to ensure that the same thing doesn't happen again. Therefore, complainants should be treated positively, and be recognised as a valuable way of finding out what they think of WWW-Webmaster Ltd.

Complaints may be made by customers and may also be made by the representatives of other organisations.

3 Complaints against the Organisation

An organisational complaint is not about the specific conduct of an individual member of staff. It is an expression of dissatisfaction by a customer about the quality of WWW-Webmaster Ltd's service delivery, a policy or procedure or the action of the organisation which may bring WWW-Webmaster Ltd's credibility into disrepute.

4 Confidentiality

It is of paramount importance that customer confidentiality is maintained at all times. The investigation of a complaint does not remove the need to respect customer's confidentiality and the requirements of the Data Protection Act should be met at all times.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

The Customer Service Manager is responsible to the Managing Director for ensuring that complaints are dealt with in accordance these policies.

The Managing Director will retain overall responsibility for the WWW-Webmaster Ltd complaints procedure and for the review of complaints which are lodged against WWW-Webmaster Ltd. The Customer Service Manager is to ensure that complaints of a serious nature are brought to the immediate attention of the Managing Director.

All complaints of a serious nature are to be forwarded **immediately** to the Managing Director who will nominate an individual to undertake an investigation into the complaints.

6 Types of Complaints

a. Complaints made in Person

Complaints are more likely to be resolved if they are dealt with as they arise by those on the spot.

Any member of staff receiving a verbal complaint is required to:

- Check that the Customer's needs are being met. This may require urgent action before any matters relating to the complaint are tackled;
- Give complainants the opportunity to discuss their concerns in private and encourage them to speak openly and freely about them;
- In all cases of verbal complaints, particularly face to face, staff are advised to ensure a witness is present when the complaint is being made.
- Inform the complainant that they can make their complaint to the Customer Service Manager or the Managing Director.

The staff member dealing with a verbal complaint should ensure that the complaint is logged onto the complaints pro forma (Appendix A) and confirm with the complainant that the details are correct. This should include:

- The name and address of the complainant
- Details of the complaint
- Any action taken as a result of receiving the complaint.

This information should be immediately referred to the Customer Service Manager saying that a verbal complaint has been received with an indication on whether a written complaint can be expected.

If unresolved at the time, the member of staff should then invite the complainant to submit their complaint in writing. It should then be treated as a formal complaint and forwarded to the Managing Director. The Managing Director will nominate an individual to undertake an investigation.

b. Written comments and complaints

i. Comments

All negative comments of a minor nature received may be dealt with locally without the involvement of the Managing Director. However, comments and replies must be copied to the Managing Director and Customer Support Manager for information.

If staff are unsure whether a negative comment should be treated as a complaint, advice must be sought from the Customer Service Manager prior to any response being given.

ii. Written Complaints

All written complaints must be treated as formal and forwarded immediately to the Customer Support Manager. Written complaints should be dealt with by the relevant Directors/Senior Managers.

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c. Dealing with Written Complaints

When received, complaints should be date stamped and recorded at source on the complaints report pro forma. A standard acknowledgement letter (Appendix B) is to be sent to the complainant within **two working days** of receipt by the Designated Director/Senior Manager:

The letter should:

- Acknowledge that the complaint has been received;
- Express regret that the person has a complaint
- Explain the complaints procedure;
- Give the name of the person dealing with the complaint and details of how to contact them;
- Where necessary, clarify any issues arising from the complaint;

All communications should always be marked '**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL** and/or **PERSONAL**' and sent by first class post or email if specifically requested by the complainant.

A copy of the complainant's letter, the acknowledgement letter and completed complaints pro forma is to be sent to the Managing Director and Customer Service Manager by the Designated Director/Senior Manager. The complaints pro forma should also be updated to show that an acknowledgement letter has been sent.

The Managing Director will ensure the following action is taken:

- Entrust the complaint to a Senior Manager who will conduct a thorough investigation of it and pass the evidence to the Customer Service Manager within one week of the complaint being received. Correspondence can be faxed, e-mailed or sent via post.

- The nominated investigator should present the evidence from these investigations to the relevant Designated Directors/Senior Managers, who will read the evidence and draft a final outcome letter and forwarded to the Managing Director.
- If the complainant has indicated that he/she would like a meeting, the Senior Manager dealing with the complaint will arrange for the Designated Directors/Senior Managers to meet them prior to forwarding a draft final outcome letter to the Managing Director.

d. Final Outcome Letters

The Customer Service Manager should draft a final outcome letter (Appendix C) on behalf of the Managing Director within **15 working days** of the date the letter was received. The letter should be sent to the Managing Director, together with copies of the evidence, for approval and amendments. If it is not possible to complete the investigation within this time, the complainant should be sent a holding letter (Appendix D) to inform them of the reason for the delay and when they can expect to receive a final outcome. The Customer Service Manager should be informed and receive a copy of the holding letter.

- The final outcome letter is personally signed by the Managing Director and sent to the complainant within **20 working days** of the date the complaint letter was received.

The letter is to be copied to:

- The Managing Director
- Appropriate Senior Manager

8 Support for Staff Complained Against

Staff need to be informed at the start when a complaint has been made against them. Individual members of staff should also see any letters of complaint in which they are mentioned. All staff named in the complaint must be updated during the process and informed of the outcome of the complaint. Staff members may need support and assistance in the preparation of reports of evidence required during the complaints process.

Feedback from Senior Management to individual members of staff will be done via the Line Management structure.

9 Filing/Disposal

A copy of the final outcome letter is filed with all relevant documentation and kept on file at WWW-Webmaster Ltd. The prime complaints documentation should be retained for the period of five years.

10 Training

Line Managers are responsible for identifying staff who should receive training in the handling of complaints. All new staff will receive a copy of this procedure on induction and other relevant information for handling complaints. If staff feel that they require training they should speak to their Line Manager.

11 Ombudsman Service

If we are unable to deal with your complaint Ombudsman Services may be able to help. Ombudsman Services is an independent dispute resolution service. For more information visit:

www.ombudsman-services.org

Appendix A

Proforma for Recording Verbal Complaints

Complainant's Name:

Complainant's Address:

Brief Description of Complaint:

Complaint Resolved: Yes No

Actions Taken

Signed:

Date

Appendix B

Acknowledgement Letter

Our ref:

Direct Line:

Fax:

E-mail:

Date

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Name

Address

Dear

Re: Acknowledgement of complaint

Thank you for your letter dated *(insert date)* regarding *(give a brief nature of complaint)*.

Clearly the issues you raise are of great concern and please be assured that your complaint will be investigated thoroughly and a full reply will be forwarded to by *(enter date 20 working days from the date the complaint was received)*. If this is not possible I will contact you again to advise you of the position.

If in the meantime you would like to meet to discuss your complaint please contact me at the above address and telephone number.

The Managing Director will write to you shortly to advise on the outcome of the investigation.

Yours sincerely

Name/Title of Manager acknowledging complaint

Appendix C

Full Response Letter

Our ref:

Direct Line:

Fax:

E-mail:

Date

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Name

Address

Dear

Re: Complaint about.....

I am writing to provide you with a full response to the complaint you raised in you letter dated *(insert date)* regarding *(brief summary if appropriate)*.

(Include full response t the issues raised within the complaint)

I would like to assure you that the issues you raised have been taken seriously and fully investigated. However, if you feel that this response does not address your complaint, or if you have any further questions, please contact *(name and contact number)*. We would also be happy to go through the details with you in person if this would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Chris May

Managing Director

Appendix D

Holding Letter for Complaints

Our ref:

Direct Line:

Fax:

E-mail:

Date

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Name

Address

Dear

I am writing further to my letter dated (*insert date*) to apologise for the delay in providing you with a reply to your complaint.

The delay has been caused by (*Provide reasons/explanation for delay*).

I expect to be able to respond to your complaint by [*insert date*], and apologise once again for the delay as I acknowledge that this is very frustrating. However, I can confirm that we are endeavouring to gather information to provide a full response to you as soon as is possible. Therefore, I would be grateful if you could afford us a little more time to complete this process. I will be in contact once again to provide you with a full and final response.

In the meantime, I trust you will not hesitate to contact me directly should you have any concerns or queries.

Yours Sincerely

Name/Title of Manager