

A15 - Complaints & Appeals Policy

Authorised Reviewer: Company Secretary



1. Purpose of policy

This policy manages our clients and other customers making complaints and appeals. The Company Secretary is responsible for maintaining a log and dealing with all of the formal complaints and appeals.

1.1 Definition of a complaint and an appeal

A complaint is defined as *“a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable”* with respect to the service being delivered to our clients or other customers.

An appeal is defined as *“an application to higher authority for a decision to be reversed”* only if the client believes the policy has not been followed, this excludes eviction decisions as the Court appearance will be the given opportunity to appeal.

1.2 Complaints & appeals log

If an informal complaint/appeal is received (verbally or in writing), this can be dealt with by an appropriate colleague and their Head of Service responding to the individual within 2 working days of receipt of the informal complaint/appeal without the need to involve the Company Secretary.

Where a formal complaint/appeal is made the details should be forwarded to the Company Secretary to process.

The Company Secretary is responsible for ensuring resolution of the formal complaint/appeal.

1.3 Acknowledgement

From the date of receiving the complaint/appeal, the Company Secretary acknowledge the complaint/appeal by:

- ◆ Write to and/or e-mail the individual confirming receipt of the complaint/appeal within **5 working** days.

1.4 Response

The Company Secretary should respond to the individual confirming the action to be taken within **10 working** days from date of acknowledgement.

If the action requires further consultation this should not take longer than **25 working** days from the date of the individual receiving the confirmation action letter.

Responses can be either via email, letter or phone call (at the discretion of the Company Secretary).

Responses are not standardised as they are different for each circumstance; but should contain (where applicable):

- ◆ a summary of the complaint/appeal;
- ◆ the date which indicates when the action to be taken will or has been made;
- ◆ if the decision has already been made, disclose the reasons for the decision. Any supporting documentation which would assist in the individual understanding the reason for the decision should be attached; and
- ◆ if the individual has an option to appeal, indicate their right to do so.

1.5 Record keeping

Where phone calls are made or received, it is essential that relevant notes are made to ensure completeness of the case notes and compliance with policy guidelines.

All complaints/appeals received, along with responses, correspondence and other related documentation should be retained.

The Company Secretary is responsible for maintaining and recording all formal complaints/appeals and their resolutions.

2. Timing of complaints and appeals

Complaints

All complaints should be made within 3 months from when the incident occurred. Any complaint made after 3 months should be made in writing and should disclose the reasons why the complaint was not submitted within 3 months.

Appeals

All appeals should be made within 1 month from when the incident occurred. Any appeal made after 1 month should be made in writing and should disclose the reasons why the appeal was not submitted within 1 month.

Final appeals should be made within 2 months.

3. Informal complaints/appeals

An informal complaint/appeal can be made in the first instance verbally or in writing and this can be dealt with by an appropriate colleague and their Head of Service. The appropriate colleague and their Head of Service must respond to the individual within 2 working days of receipt of an informal complaint/appeal and every possible resolution should be sought before it becomes a formal complaint.

4. Formal complaints/appeals

A formal complaint/appeal should be made in writing using the template on **Appendix A**. This should be acknowledged and dealt with by the Company Secretary (see 1.3 and 1.4 above). The Chief Executive will be responsible for the final decision.

Approved Date: 4th July 2016

