

# Complaints Policy

# INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Bristow & Sutor's policy on dealing with compliments and complaints. Through our Complaints and Compliments Policy we will strive to resolve complaints speedily, effectively and fairly.

## **DEFINITION**

### ***What is a compliment?***

A compliment is an expression of praise, admiration or congratulation, however and by whoever made, about the standard of service, action by the firm or our staff.

### ***What is a complaint?***

A complaint is deemed as communication it receives about dissatisfaction with a service and is justified where there has been an appreciable variation from normal legal procedure, which has caused significant inconvenience or hardship. A complaint is valid:

- When we have failed to do some thing we agreed to do
- When we have done something wrong
- When we have treated a complainant unfairly or rudely
- When we fail to provide information
- When the complainant is concerned with the quality of the service we provide

## **APPROACH**

### **Compliments**

We are always glad to hear from clients and customers who are satisfied with our services. Compliments are recorded and where appropriate acknowledged within reasonable timescales. Where a compliment is received in writing, the Compliance Officer will send a copy of the compliment to the relevant Departmental Manager to provide feedback.

### **Complaints**

#### *Stage 1 – Operational Level*

The complaints process has four stages (1, 2, 3 and 4). Our aim is to resolve problems at Stage 1, as close to their source as possible. Discussing the complaint directly with the member of staff should be the fastest and most effective way to resolve the problem.

#### *Stage 2 – Compliance Officer*

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, he/she may lodge a formal complaint. To ensure that the complaint is fully investigated we provide a Complaint Form (available upon request), and ask that all information is detailed to aid a comprehensive response. The complaint is reviewed by the Compliance Officer who will conduct a full investigation, with the Line Manager and the staff member involved where relevant. The complaint details are entered into the complaint database, which will give the complaint a

unique reference number. Within 15 working days of receipt of a complaint, an acknowledgement or a substantive response will be sent to the complainant. Emphasis is placed on providing an accurate and detailed response which aims to resolve the issue.

*Stage 3 – Quality/Technical Manager*

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, the complaint will be escalated to the Quality/Technical Manager who will conduct a further review of the complaint, proceedings and outcome. The appeal must be received in writing, together with a copy of previous correspondence. The Quality/Technical Manager will involve the Managing Director at his/her discretion as part of the Appeal Process. Within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal, an acknowledgement or a substantive response will be sent to the complainant.

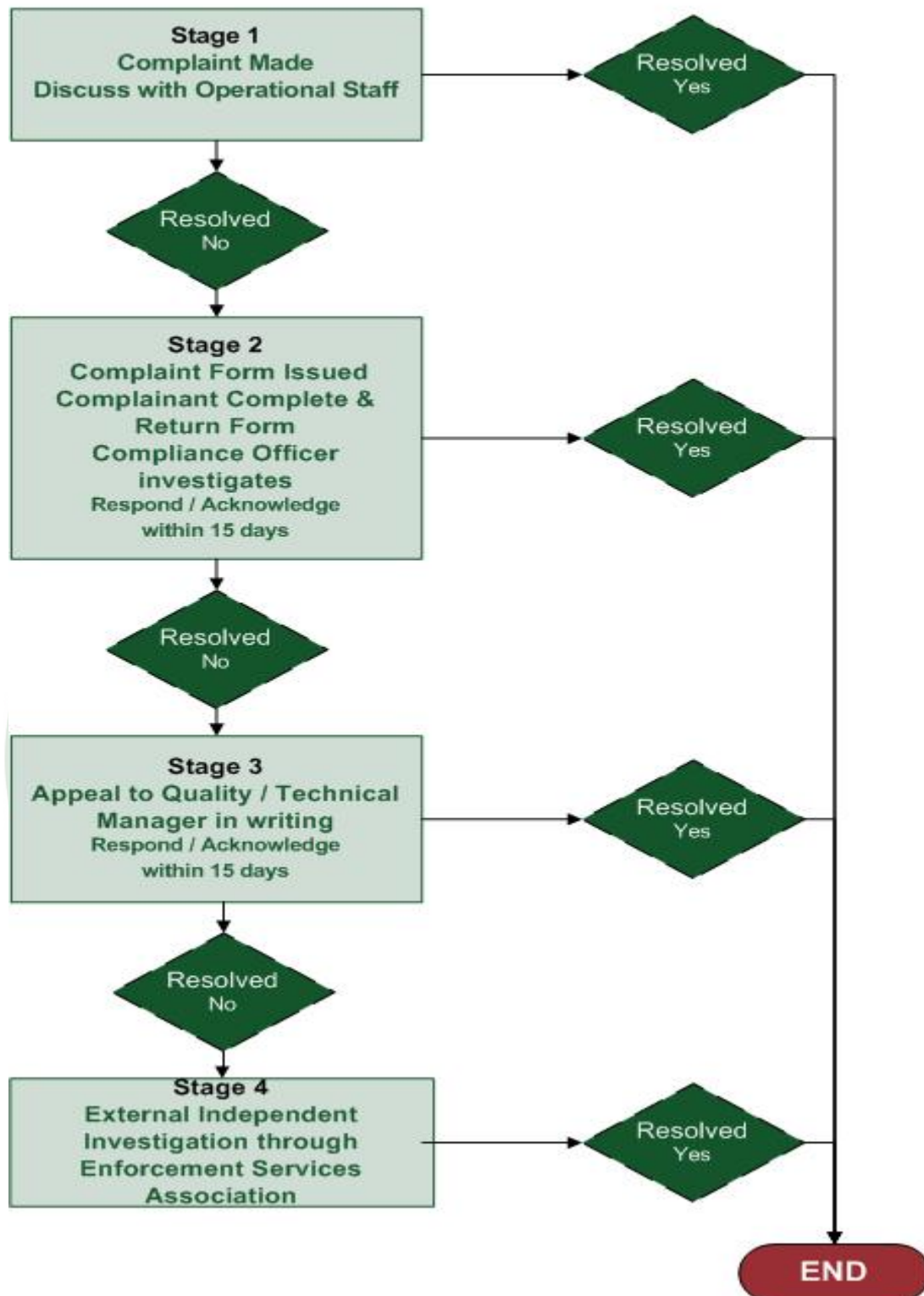
*Stage 4*

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal investigation, and he/she has exhausted the company procedure, the complainant has the right to contact the Enforcement Services Association who will conduct an independent investigation.

Enforcement Services Association  
Park House  
10 Park Street  
Bristol  
BS1 5HX

## Complaints Process

### How We Deal with Complaints



## **MONITORING**

Complaints are analysed monthly and further reviewed at quarterly management meetings to decide if there are any actions that can be taken to prevent the occurrence of similar complaints. Any further preventive action determined at these meetings will be instigated and monitored by the Quality Manager.

## **DEALING WITH PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS**

- There are a small number of customers who, for whatever reason, fall within the category of persistent or excessively persistent complainants in that they persist unreasonably with their complaints, or make complaints in order to make life difficult for the company rather than genuinely to resolve a specific grievance.
- This Policy is to ensure that persistent and excessively persistent complainants are dealt with fairly, honestly and properly whilst also ensuring that staff members and the company as a whole does not suffer any undeserved detriment.
- A persistent complainant is a person who, in complaining about issues, displays behaviour/ actions which are obsessive, harassing and repetitious. This may involve making serial complaints about different matters, or continuing to raise the same or similar matters over and over again even though a reasonable explanation has been given.
- Once the Compliance Officer forms the view that they are dealing with a persistent complainant, the matter will be referred to the Quality/Technical Manager as soon as possible. The Quality/ Technical Manager will decide in consultation with the Compliance Officer involved whether an alternative way of dealing with the customer is required. They have the discretion to deal with these as they think best, and may consult with the Managing Director to agree a course of action with regard to future responses. It should, however, be remembered that habitual complainers may still make complaints which are fully justified.

## **ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS**

Anonymous complaints will be investigated as far as possible and a record of the complaint will be kept in accordance with normal procedure. If it is deemed that the complaint is simply malicious; the Quality/Technical Manager will decide in consultation with the Compliance Officer, whether an alternative way of dealing with the complaint is required.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Complaints made to the company will be treated in confidence. Customers who make their complaints public in the media may forfeit their right to anonymity.