

Date	22 February 2024
Item	12.0
Title	Annual Complaints and Compliments Report
Author	David Pope, Director of Operations
Purpose	To report on corporate complaints and compliments about CILEx Regulation for 2023, prior to inclusion in the 2023 CRL Annual Report.
Recommendation	To receive and APPROVE for inclusion in the 2023 CRL Annual report the information on complaints and compliments received by CRL.
Timing	N/A
Impact Assessment	Complaints provide valuable opportunities to identify improvements to CRL's service that will benefit future service users. Failure to provide a fair, consistent and structured process to handle complaints about CRL's service may lead to reputational damage
Impact on Regulatory Objectives	The work covered in this report impacts on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protecting and promoting the public interest; - protecting and promoting the interests of consumers
Implications for resources	N/A
Impact on consumer empowerment	N/A
Impact on ongoing competence	N/A
Publication status	For publication
Appendices	N/A

Purpose of report

1. This paper provides the Board with a report on corporate complaints and compliments received by CRL in 2023. This information will be included in the 2023 CRL Annual report.

Background

2. CRL reports complaints to the Board in line with the Service Complaints Policy for accountability and to improve standards as well as CRL's commitment to an open and transparent culture. Staff have historically been encouraged to record compliments given by external and internal customers and stakeholders, although for this year we are not in a position to report meaningful information.
3. The level of complaints reflects very well on the CRL staff during what has continued to be a particularly challenging period with the uncertainty caused by the ongoing review by CILEX of its regulatory arrangements.

Key issues for consideration

4. There were five stage 1 complaints in 2023, compared to eleven stage 1 complaints in 2022. One complaint was escalated to stage 2.
5. The number of complaints has fallen in 2023 and this reflects the actions of staff in addressing matters as soon as they are aware of an issue for a member or the public. It

remains very low when looked at in relation to the number of interactions that CRL staff have with members, applicants and the public.

Complaints numbers, escalations and whether upheld:

Stage 1 Complaints 2023	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
No. Stage 1 complaints (corporate)	0	4	0	1	5
% Response within 15 working days	-	100%	-	-	100%
% Stage 1 complaints upheld or partially upheld	-	50%	-	-	50%
Stage 2 Complaints 2023	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
No. Stage 2 complaints (corporate)	-	-	-	1	1
% Response within 15 working days	-	-	-	1	1
% Stage 2 complaints upheld or partially upheld	-	-	-	0%	0%

Type:

- To help identify any themes, complaints are recorded against the following categories. If a complaint relates to more than one issue, then it is recorded against the category that best reflects the main source of dissatisfaction.

Type of Complaint	No. of Complaints
Policy/procedure/Rules	1
Staff behaviour/attitude	0
Service failure	0
Delay	1
Poor Service	2
Lack of response	0
Invoicing/payment	0
Enforcement Decision	1
Other	0

- In reviewing the seriousness of the complaints, none of the complaints related to exceptional risk or loss, nor had reputation management consequences.

Business Area Stage 1 complaints:

- These are formal complaints that are dealt with by the relevant senior manager and in the response CRL indicates whether the complaint is justified, partly justified or not justified.
- Enforcement case 1: this complaint was an alleged service failure because of the outcome of an investigation. They have exercised their right to an appeal of the decision which will be heard in 2024.
- Entity case 1: this complaint was related to what were perceived as unreasonable requirements to have their firm authorised. These were in line with standard expectations and this complaint was not upheld.

11. Other 1: this complaint was upheld due to delays in receipt of their practising certificate following completion of advocacy course.
12. Practitioner team case 1: this complaint was upheld, due to delays in responding to communications regarding an application. The applicant subsequently thanked CRL staff for their assistance.
13. Practitioner team case 2: this complaint related to an applicant missing the deadline to apply for an advocacy course. It was subsequently resolved with the course provider, but the complaint was not upheld as all the correct procedures had been followed.
14. Where service issues have been highlighted, CRL has reflected on how these can be addressed, and processes improved. There is much improved information on the CRL website related to timescales for applications and responses, and the enforcement processes with a new flowchart setting out expectations for complainants. The automated emails now also include this information and links to the relevant webpages. These changes were promised in the 2022 report.

Business Area Stage 2 complaints

15. If a complainant is unhappy with the Stage 1 response (partially justified/upheld or not justified/not upheld) they can request that it be reviewed by a Director of Service who had no operational involvement with the matter or by the CEO.
16. There was one Business Area Stage 2 complaint in 2023 related to an enforcement process which was not upheld. The complainant has continued to engage with CRL notwithstanding the decision.

Compliments:

17. In previous years this report has included the compliments received by staff during the year together with some examples of the positive praise received. Unfortunately, because of the various staff changes during 2023, the recording of these compliments happened infrequently and therefore it would be unfair to provide any numbers as a comparison against previous years.
18. This should not be read as a reflection on the service that the CRL staff provide to members and the public.
19. Staff will again be reminded regularly to share compliments they have received from colleagues and stakeholders.

Recommendation

20. The Board is asked to receive and **APPROVE** for inclusion in the 2023 CRL Annual report the information on corporate complaints received by CRL.