

## Service Complaints Policy

### Introduction

We recognise that sometimes, we may get things wrong or not do something that a user of our service thinks we should have done.

This policy aims to set out a fair, consistent and structured process for us to handle complaints about our service. It can only be used to complain about us. If you are complaining to us about an individual legal services provider or firm that we regulate, you should use the [Misconduct Information Form](#) which you can find on our website.

We recognise the importance of feedback from complaints, compliments and comments. Using this feedback can help us to improve and make sure mistakes don't happen again.

We define a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction with our services'.

### Our Complaints Process

You can contact us by email, telephone or letter to make a complaint.

We have a two-stage complaints process:

#### Stage 1

We will get in touch with you to see if your complaint can be resolved informally. If this is not possible, we will log your complaint at Stage 1 and acknowledge it within five working days, telling you who is dealing with it. Your complaint will be dealt with by a relevant senior manager. Wherever possible, we will respond to you within 15 working days but if we are unable to do so, we will explain why and tell you when a full response will be sent. When sending our full response we will tell you whether we find your complaint justified, partly justified or not justified.

#### Stage 2

If you are unhappy with our Stage 1 response you can ask us to review it. An acknowledgement will be sent to you within three working days. Your complaint will be reviewed by a Director of Service who had no operational involvement with your matter, or if they dealt with the complaint at Stage 1, it will be reviewed by our Chief Executive. A full response will be sent to you within 20 working days. If we cannot respond fully within that time, we will explain why and tell you when a full response will be sent.

A complaint cannot be escalated to Stage 2 without first completing Stage 1.

## **Learning from complaints**

We record and monitor complaints, as well as compliments and comments. We report numbers of justified complaints and their subject matter to our Board quarterly, together with timeframes for dealing with complaints. We report to our Board annually on complaints and compliments, highlighting the learning we have taken from receiving and resolving complaints and what changes or improvements we have made in response.

## **Exceptions to this Policy**

There are exceptions, which will not be dealt with under this policy:

It cannot be used to challenge a decision made by a Committee, Panel or Tribunal of CILEx Regulation including (but not limited to):

- Admissions and Licensing Committee
- Professional Conduct Panel or a decision by an officer under powers delegated by the Panel
- Disciplinary Tribunal
- Appeals Panel

If you wish to challenge a decision of one of these bodies you must use the relevant appeal or review process. You will be notified about the relevant appeal or review process at the conclusion of the matter.

**Note:** We may exercise discretion to defer responding to a complaint about our handling of an application to the Admissions and Licensing Committee or an investigation under our Rules while the matter is ongoing.

Where we consider that if we respond to the complaint before the application or investigation has been dealt with, it could adversely affect the process, or where the complaint appears to have been made in order to impact on that process, we may defer consideration of the complaint until the application or investigation has concluded. In these circumstances we will tell you why we have decided to defer responding to your complaint.

If this happens we will contact you within 10 working days of the date on which the application or investigation has concluded, to ask you whether you still wish to pursue your complaint and if so which aspects of the complaint you still wish us to respond to.

## **Vexatious Complaints**

We have a duty to make sure that regulatory funding is spent wisely and achieves value for our regulated community, complainants and stakeholders. We also have a duty to protect the safety and wellbeing of our staff.



Our Unreasonable Behaviour Policy sets out how we will manage serial, persistent and vexatious complainants. Our [Unreasonable Behaviour Policy](#) also applies to complaints about CILEx members.

### **The CILEx Group**

CILEx Regulation is the independent regulator of members of CILEx and other individuals who are not members of CILEx, but who have Practice Rights in the legal sector.

CILEx Regulation Limited is part of a Group of companies known as the CILEx Group. Complaints about CILEx Regulation are dealt with under this Policy. CILEx Regulation does not deal with complaints about other companies in the Group. Each company in the Group has its own complaints policy.