

Complaints Handling Policy

Metropolis Surveyors LLP operate a complaints handling procedure in line with the requirements set out in the RICS Professional Guidance Note “Complaints Handling” produced in July 2016. This guidance is taken as best practice. However, Metropolis takes account of specific requirements as a regulated firm and registered valuer with regard to the handling of complaints following Rule 7 of RICS’ *Rules of Conduct for Firms* which states: **‘A Firm shall operate a complaints handling procedure and maintain a complaints log. The complaints handling procedure must include an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism that is approved by the Regulatory Board.’**

What is a complaint?

The definition of a complaint is **any expression of dissatisfaction.**

Although no firm likes to receive a complaint, it is inevitable that one will be received at some point and, when this happens, the complaint needs to be handled reasonably and consistently to minimise reputational and financial risk.

Effective complaint handling is a critical element in the risk management toolkit of all professional firms, both as part of good customer service and also to protect the firm in the event of an unsubstantiated or inflated claim.

The intention is that, if managed well, complaints can also provide an opportunity to identify and rectify specific problems with service and develop a better relationship with customers by demonstrating that their concerns are treated seriously.

Why do complaints occur?

Complaints generally arise when expectations have not been met. Such expectations may relate to the quality, scope, timeliness or understanding of the service or advice to be provided by the surveyor.

Where instructed directly, a customer’s reasonable expectations would normally be set by the Terms of Engagement shared with them as part of the instruction process. However, direct instructions are not always received and this can result in unclear expectations.

What is a Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP)?

- An effective CHP should:
 - be fit for purpose – it should reflect the size and structure of the business
 - made available to all staff – a CHP is intended to provide clarity and consistency to staff and clients
 - be understood by all staff – keep records of staff training
 - be shared with complainants or potential complainants – supplying them with a copy should be routine
 - be regularly reviewed at a senior level – record evidence of review, to include reviewer details and review date
 - be agreed with PII brokers/provider(s) – the CHP should reflect processes that do not compromise PII cover and
 - provide details of access to independent redress if the firm cannot resolve the complaint.

How are complaints managed?

All complaints are dealt with by the Compliance Department under the direction of the Compliance Director / Commercial Director and follow the Complaints Handling Procedure set out in the Business Management Manual.

The starting point in resolving a complaint is to establish the root cause of the issue. If a misunderstanding occurs at this early stage, there is scope for avoidable frustration and a more challenging resolution process. When the basis of a complaint is understood, deciding on a course of action to reach a good outcome is easier to achieve. The course of action to be taken is established by the Compliance Director / Commercial Director.

Complaints can be received from customers or business clients and the appropriate approach will be followed including issuing the relevant CHP where deemed necessary.

If a client calls to make a complaint, they will always be asked to email their complaint to compliance@metropolis-surveyors.com to ensure that the detail is understood. If they refuse, the member of staff will offer to pass them through to the Compliance Team (or a Manager if no one is available) who will take their details (name, address, property, email address, complaint details) and email them to the compliance team. A confirmation/acknowledgement email must be sent within 2 working days.

All emails, attachments and relevant information are collated into a complaints folder held on the Compliance drive and added to the Complaints Log. During the process, all relevant correspondence is stored in the same folder.

The Compliance team make the relevant enquiries of surveyors and any relevant third parties to establish the facts relating to the complaint and produce an appropriate response. Where necessary specialists or independent experts may be employed – this must be approved by the Commercial Director/Compliance Director in his absence.

Upon completion of the complaint, all correspondence is copied to the file storage facility and retained for the required timescales.

At the end of the complaint process, root cause analysis is completed and training needs assessed. The information is reviewed in line with the firm's ISO9001:2015 certification to ensure continual improvement.

For more information regarding this policy, contact the Compliance Director.

Related documents

- RICS Complaints Handling Guidance - July 2016 Edition 1 (Advisory)
- Metropolis Complaints Management Process (Diagram)
- Metropolis Complaints Handling Procedure – Business Management Manual - – (Procedure)
- Metropolis Complaints Handling Procedure – Customers (Document)
- Metropolis Complaints Handling Procedure – Business Clients (Document)