

# **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

It is vital that we respond professionally to all kinds of feedback from our customers. Handling complaints is a key way in which we ensure that we offer this quality service and learn the lessons such valuable feedback offers us about our performance and processes.

In addition, as a reputable company providing services in a regulatory market, we have to demonstrate that we have an efficient complaint handling and logging procedure in place.

Robust Details Limited (RDL) uses Respond Feedback software to log complaints onto a 'feedback database' and capture vital customer feedback that would otherwise be lost.

## **2 PURPOSE OF PROCEDURE**

### **2.1 Purpose of Procedure**

This document explains how RDL deals with complaints

## **3 RESPONSIBILITY**

### **3.1 Chief Executive**

Responsible for ensuring that:

- a suitable and effective complaints procedure is established and maintained
- feedback is handled and resolved effectively and within the specified response times
- corrective and/or preventive action is taken as appropriate to rectify issues and improve RDL's products, service and reputation.

### **3.2 Operations Manager (Secretariat)**

Responsible for ensuring that:

- the procedure is administered effectively by the Secretariat
- formal complaints are resolved and recorded as required
- formal complaints are periodically analysed and reported to the Chief Executive for review.

### **3.3 Feedback Database Manager**

Responsible for management of the feedback database including its maintenance and configuration.

### **3.4 Feedback Administrator**

Responsible for overseeing the recording of information on the feedback database and ensuring that feedback is properly handled, co-ordinated and monitored.

## **4 DEFINITIONS**

### **4.1 Complaints**

“A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, related to its products, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.” (BS ISO 10002-2004).

Complaints falling within the categories listed below must be logged onto the feedback database.

1. High profile complaints (see 6.2) where, for example, legal action, politicians, Government departments, consumer groups and the media are involved, or where there is a risk that they may become involved.
2. Complaints which represent a risk to the loyalty of a major customer or RDL's relationship with them.
3. Complaints involving RD assessment decisions.
4. Complaints about the provision of, or failure to provide, satisfactory service by Robust Details, involving financial loss, material distress or material inconvenience.
5. Complaints which are not directly related to RDL's service, which would include complaints about robust detail constructions received from home occupiers.
6. Complaints which do not fall within the above categories but which appear to be of equal significance to RDL and/or its stakeholders.

In the event that a member of staff decides to deal with a complaint verbally, details of the complaint and its resolution must still be logged on the Feedback database.

## **5 LEVELS OF COMPLAINT HANDLING**

There are three escalating levels for complaints handling.

**RDL aims to resolve all complaints at level 1.**

However, if a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at this level, there is recourse to a second level and similarly, in some cases, a third level.

### **5.1 Level 1 Initial Complaint**

The appropriate area(s) of the business must investigate the complaint and respond to the customer in accordance with this procedure. (see also Appendix A – Competence and authority to resolve complaints).

## **5.2 Level 2 Internal Review**

In the event that a complainant is not satisfied with the response received at Level 1, the complaint may be escalated to Level 2. A senior person who was not involved in the original decision will review the complaint. This will normally be the Chief Executive or another senior RDL staff member.

If the complaint could potentially have an impact on the company's reputation or key stakeholders then it must be referred to the Chief Executive.

## **5.3 Level 3 Panel Review**

If a complaint could potentially have an impact on the company's reputation or key stakeholders and the complainant is dissatisfied with the way in which their original complaint was handled at level 2, they are entitled to have their complaint referred to a panel formed from RDL's Board of directors for a final review and decision.

# **6 RECEIVING COMPLAINTS**

## **6.1 Receiving Complaints**

The person receiving the complaint may resolve it if he or she has the necessary competence and authority (see Appendix A – Competence and authority to resolve complaints). Alternatively it may be passed to someone else with the necessary competence and authority if this would be operationally more effective or efficient. Details of the complaint must always be forwarded to the Feedback Administrator promptly (including the name of the person resolving the complaint). The complaint will then be logged onto Respond.

In cases which do not fall within the scope of Appendix A – Competence and authority to resolve complaints, the Operations Manager or, if unavailable at the time, a Technical Advisor must decide on who will resolve the complaint.

All correspondence, including the completed response, must be sent to the Feedback Administrator so that Respond can be kept up to date.

Details of the complaint and subsequent progress (including any further correspondence and the response) must be forwarded to the Feedback Administrator promptly.

The Feedback Administrator must log the complaint and details of all subsequent correspondence onto the feedback database so that it reflects an up to date record of the complaint at all times.

The minimum details to be recorded are listed in Appendix B – Details to be Recorded.

In the event of any doubt within the Secretariat about who is the most appropriate person to deal with the complaint, the Operations Manager should decide. If the Operations Manager is in doubt, then the Chief Executive must decide.

In some cases, the Chief Executive or a director may wish to deal personally with particular complaints. As in other cases, the Feedback Administrator must be kept informed of progress promptly.

In the event that the complaint relates to more than one aspect (e.g. fee levels and quality of service), the person handling the complaint must ensure that the relevant people for each aspect are consulted before a response is completed.

## **6.2 High Profile Complaints**

In addition to being logged by the Feedback Administrator, the following type of complaints should be forwarded to the Chief Executive immediately and copied to the Operations Manager. The Chief Executive must consult RDL's media consultant and consumer representative director as and when appropriate.

Complaints involving one or more of the following:

- Politicians - MPs, MEPs (Members of the European Parliament), AMs (Members of the Welsh Assembly), MSPs (Members of the Scottish Parliament) or Members of the Northern Ireland Executive
- Government Departments, including Communities and Local Government (CLG), the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
- Consumer groups or enforcement organisations, including the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Trading Standards, the Consumers Association etc.
- Broadcast, print and online media
- Industry bodies such as Trade associations, HBF, the Building Control Performance Standards Advisory Group (BCPSAG), Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC) or the Construction Industry Council (CIC)
- actual or threatened legal action against RDL, its directors or its employees
- alleged negligence against RDL, its directors or its employees
- potential or actual serious conflicts with a major customer (an example of major customer = large builder).

## **7 RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS**

Formal complaints must be acknowledged promptly following receipt within the timescale specified (Appendix C – Required Response Timescales) unless a full response is given within the same timescale.

Formal complaints must be investigated promptly and a full response given within the timescale specified (Appendix C – Required Response Timescales).

## **8 CLOSING COMPLAINTS**

Complaints may be **closed** by the Feedback Administrator when:

- RDL's final decision letter has been sent; or
- the complainant has failed to refer back to RDL within 8 weeks of RDL's response to their complaint; or
- the complainant has indicated they no longer wish to pursue the complaint.

A complaint may be reopened at any time, if necessary.

## **9 RECORDS REQUIRED**

See Appendix B – Details to be Recorded.

## **10 DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THIS PROCEDURE**

- Feedback database
- Acknowledgement letter guide template
- Full response guide template(s).

## 11 Appendix A – Competence and authority to resolve complaints

Category		Authorised to resolve
1	High profile complaints (see 6.2) where, for example, legal action, politicians, Government departments, consumer groups and the media are involved, or where there is a risk that they may become involved	Chief Executive
2	Complaints which represent a risk to the loyalty of a major customer or RDL's relationship with it	Chief Executive
3	Complaints involving RD assessment decisions	Chief Executive
4	Complaints about the provision of, or failure to provide, satisfactory service by Robust Details, involving financial loss, material distress or material inconvenience [unless also category 2, 3 or 4 which take priority  Secretariat technical service  Secretariat sales and administration  Other operational services	Technical Advisor  Senior Administrator or Administrator or Technical Advisor  Operations Manager or Technical Advisor in consultation with Chief Executive
5	Complaints which are not directly related to RDL's service, which would include complaints about robust detail constructions received from home occupiers	Operations Manager or Technical Advisor but in consultation with Chief Executive in all cases
6	Complaints which do not fall within the above categories but which appear to be of equal significance to RDL and/or its stakeholders	Operations Manager or Technical Advisor but in consultation with Chief Executive in all cases

## **12 Appendix B – Details to be Recorded**

The minimum information required for a formal complaint is:

- Customer's name and title
- Customer's contact details, including telephone number
- Date received by RDL
- Description of complaint/compliment
- Any useful reference numbers, if known, e.g. unique dwelling reference number, builder or developer name, address, etc.
- If a complaint, what was said to the customer and whether it was resolved to the satisfaction of the customer
- The outcome, if you were able to resolve the complaint by the end of the working day after receipt by RDL
- all details necessary to monitor and report on the required response times.

## 13 Appendix C – Required Response Timescales

The **deadlines** for responding to complaints at level 1 are:

- Written acknowledgement within 3 working days of receiving the complaint, unless a full response is sent within this time
- Full written response (or, if this is genuinely not possible, a written holding response explaining what is happening/what we are doing) within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.

The **deadlines** for responding to complaints at level 3 (panel review) are:

- full response within 12 weeks of receiving request for a panel review
- RDL will aim to give a full response within 6 weeks of receiving request for a level 3 panel review but this may not be possible in all cases.