



# Corporate Complaints Procedure

Chandlers Limited  
Chandlers House  
2 Southlands Road  
Bromley, Kent  
BR2 9QP

## **1. Introduction**

Our Complaints Procedures are provided as an integral part of our commitment to put the client / customer / charge payers and defendants at the heart of everything that we do. We will use complaints to demonstrate listening to our customers and also to support service improvement.

We want to develop our services and our business, so that we can continually grow and improve and we believe that the management of complaints is an integral part of this. We believe that complaints can be a rich source of information about how our performance is perceived and how it can be improved and we will apply learning accordingly.

This procedure will be used to deal with all complaints which are not covered by other procedures and it is, therefore, one of the principal mechanisms by which clients / customers / charge payers and defendants can provide feedback regarding our service delivery.

We will treat all our clients / customers / charge payers / defendants with fairness and respect, take all complaints seriously and we will do all we can to make sure that the relationship that customers have with Chandlers Limited is a positive one.

Chandlers is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. We want to ensure that all clients / customers / charge payers / defendants of the diverse community that we serve, are able to access our Complaints Procedure and we will undertake monitoring to ensure that this is the case.

Compliments, commendations and comments will be dealt with under our "Customer Service Standards".

## **2. The role of the Corporate Complaints Service**

Chandlers has a Corporate Complaints Manager whose role is to manage complaints across the company and ensure that we learn from the complaints that we receive. The Corporate Complaints Manager oversees the Complaints Procedure and ensures the consistency of its application across the business.

Additionally, the Corporate Complaints Manager is responsible for collating, monitoring and reporting on complaints received; is the first point of contact for clients / customers / charge payers / defendants who have any queries about the Complaints Procedure and provides guidance to staff on appropriate training, to support complaints handling and resolution.

### **3. Objectives of the Complaints Procedure**

To provide a means by which customers can express dissatisfaction with the quality or standard of Chandlers services

To be accessible to everyone wishing to provide feedback, in accordance with the Chandlers Equality and Diversity strategy

To ensure those who complain are dealt with promptly, fairly, openly and honestly

To ensure complaints are acted on with the focus on complainants desired outcomes where these are realistic and achievable

To resolve complaints quickly and as close to the point of service delivery as is acceptable and appropriate

To provide Chandlers Officers with information to monitor the quality and performance of service delivery

To ensure that employees of Chandlers understand the objectives and requirements of the procedure and are supported in handling complaints

To support a culture of continuous improvement and to ensure that learning is applied to improve service provision

To provide flexibility in resolving complaints with an option to suspend the complaints process where alternative methods of resolution can be used e.g. mediation

### **4. Scope of the Complaints Procedure**

The Corporate Complaints Procedure is intended to cover issues such as:

- A failure to provide a service at the level or standard expected by the Chandlers.
- The unhelpful attitude of an employee
- A failure to answer a query or respond to a request for service in accordance with the timescales set out in the Customer Care standards.
- A failure to follow the policies and procedures of Chandlers Limited.
- A failure to consider all relevant information in coming to a decision
- A failure to inform people of their rights

- A failure to provide information or the right information in a timely manner.

Where a complaint involves an allegation of misconduct including unfair discrimination (in particular discrimination or harassment on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender identify, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation) the complaints procedure will be used to establish whether a disciplinary investigation should take place, at which point, the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

## **5. Principles of the Complaints Procedure**

- We will deal with all complaints in a timely manner
- We will be fair, open and transparent in dealing with complaints
- We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and access for all people.
- We will treat all complaints positively
- We will promote learning and apply lessons learnt
- We will use complaints to improve our services
- We will be flexible in our approach to complaint handling
- We will review and monitor complaints to ensure that our procedures are accessible to all groups
- We will ensure that personal information relating to complaints is kept secure in accordance with relevant legislation
- We will aim at all times to meet the principles above but in return we ask complainants to:
  - Treat our staff with respect
  - Be honest and accurate with the information they provide
  - Supply us with more information, if we ask for it

## **6. What is a complaint?**

### **a. Definition of a complaint**

A Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about Chandlers services that requires a response. It does not matter whether that service is provided directly by the Chandlers or by a contractor or partner.

### **b. What can be complained about?**

Any service provided by Chandlers whether provided directly or by a contractor or partner providing it is not covered by other complaints or appeal procedures – see section c) below.

### **c. Who can complain?**

Anyone who is likely to be affected by our decisions, actions or inactions or the bona fide representative of such a person.

### **d. Complaints Recording**

The procedure assumes that Chandlers will be given a reasonable opportunity to provide a service, before a customer's complaint is recorded as a complaint under this procedure.

### **e. Complaint grading**

All complaints will be graded according to seriousness and likelihood of occurrence. This grading will determine the time available for and method of investigation of your concerns.

## 7. Equality and Diversity

We aim to make the complaints procedure inclusive and accessible to all by:

- Providing information in alternative formats including Braille, audio tape and minority languages, on request
- Promoting and arranging advocacy or other support needed
- Providing a telephone interpreting service
- Providing access to signing and other interpretative services
- Promoting the procedure to under represented groups

Complainants will be invited to provide information as part of the feedback process, to enable us to monitor use of the procedure and to identify changes to the procedure to improve access to it.

## 8. How can you complain?

Comments, compliments, commendations and complaints can be made in writing, by telephone, via Chandlers website, by email or in person and can be submitted at any of Chandlers establishments. To ensure prompt attention, all complaints submitted by post should be sent to the Corporate Complaints Manager at the address below. Complaints may be submitted anonymously and will be treated seriously but this may affect our ability to investigate the complaint and means we would be unable to liaise with and feed back information to the complainant.

Anyone wishing to submit a comment, compliment, commendation or complaint should do so by one of the following methods:

**By writing to:**  
Chandlers Limited  
Corporate Complaints Manager  
Chandlers House  
2 Southlands Road  
Bromley, Kent  
BR2 9QP

**By telephoning:**  
020 8290 0866

**Via Chandlers website (on-line form or email addresses available)**  
<http://www.chandlers-bailiffs.co.uk>

## **9. What happens when we receive your complaint?**

When a complaint is received, it will be assessed and will be allocated to an investigating officer.

We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days of receipt and normally provide details of the investigating officer and a date by when a response will be provided.

If it's not possible to do this within 3 working days, a simple acknowledgement will be sent and the other information will be provided within 7 working days of receipt.

We will make every effort to resolve your complaint as soon as possible.

Depending upon the assessment of the complaint, a final response will be provided any time between 2 and 60 days from receipt. If we have to extend the timescale once an acknowledgement has been sent, you will be informed.

Full details of the Corporate Complaints Procedure are available on request.

## **10. What you can do if you are not satisfied with our response?**

Customers who are unhappy with the response received from Chandlers can ask the Association of Civil Enforcement Agencies to investigate their complaint and the way in which it has been handled. The contact number for the A.C.E.A is 01924 350090 or to download a complaints form [www.acea.org.uk](http://www.acea.org.uk).

### **The ACEA Complaints Procedure**

#### **Part 1 - Action by the member**

1. Each complaint will be acknowledged within 10 working days of its receipt.
2. The member's response will be sent within 28 days of its original receipt.

#### **Part 2 - Action by the Association**

3. The Director General will acknowledge any complaint within 10 days of its receipt. Those complaints which have not previously been referred to the member concerned will be so referred and the complainant informed accordingly. (Procedure reverts to Part 1 above).

4. Where a complaint has previously been sent, in writing, to the member company by the complainant (see Part 1 above) but the complainant is dissatisfied with their written response the complaint will be investigated by

the association. A detailed response will be sent to the complainant within 14 days of receipt, by the Director General, of a report from the member company.

5. Where the Director General identifies that there may be potential for speedy resolution of the complaint this will be explored before proceeding to the next stage.

6. The Director General will copy the complaint to the Directors of the ACEA for their consideration who will reply to the Director General within 28 days. In the event of the complaint being against a member company of one of the Directors of ACEA that member company will not be involved in the decision making process. The Director General will act on the complaint when he has at least three responses from the Directors.

7. If the Directors uphold the complaint, the Director General will invite the member to reconsider their earlier reply and to write to the complainant directly. If the complaint is not upheld, the Directors will decide whether the matter can be referred to an independent panel, if the complainant wishes it to be so referred. The Director General will notify the complainant accordingly.

### **Part 3 - Action by the Independent Panel**

8. If the complainant is still not satisfied he/she may ask the Director General for the complaint to be referred to the independent panel mentioned in the leaflet. The Director General will arrange this, if previously agreed by the Directors (see 7 above).

9. The Panel will consider the complaint on the basis of the written evidence before them and also consider hearing a complainant in person if so requested. If in person, the Panel may also accept any legal or other representation as it pleases. The date and time of this Panel hearing is at the discretion of the association.

10. The Panel will have the power to recommend, if they feel that it is justified, that the company:

- remits, refunds or reduces any fees paid; or
- pays compensation based strictly on an assessment of the actual loss incurred;
- or both; and/or

it may make any other recommendation that it feels appropriate.

11. The Panel's decision is final.

12. The complainant will be notified of the Panel's findings by the Director General who will first ask if the complainant is prepared to accept them in full and final settlement of his/her claim.



13. It will be for the company concerned to take any action recommended by the Panel. If the complainant does not accept the findings, then no payment will be made and no further action will be taken.

## **11. What we will do following the investigation of your complaint?**

All complaints will be reviewed to determine whether there are any lessons to be learnt from the investigation. Where this is the case, these will be implemented in order to improve the service and may be shared across service areas where there is benefit in doing so. The implementation of lessons learnt will be monitored to ensure that opportunities for improvement are not missed.

After we have sent the response to you, we will contact you again at a later date to invite you to complete a customer satisfaction survey which asks you to comment on the handling of your complaint. The information you provide will help us to determine what improvements we can make to the handling process in the future. Any information provided will, of course, be treated as confidential.

## **12. Exclusions from the Corporate Complaints Procedure**

It is important that customer's complaints are dealt with effectively and this includes ensuring the correct procedure is used to make sure that the rights of the individual are protected and that there is no interference with another procedure or process that may take precedence.

The Corporate Complaints Procedure does not cover:

Requests for information regarding, or explanations of, Council policy or practice.

Requests that fall under the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Regulations or which are covered by any other legislation.

Matters for which there is a right of appeal, for example, where there is an appeal process within Chandler's business policy's or to an independent tribunal, or a legal remedy.

A complaint relating to a claim under public liability will not be dealt with under the complaints procedure.

A complaint will not be considered, or further considered, through this procedure where in relation to the substance of the complaint:

- It has been withdrawn by the complainant, unless the Chandlers decides that there is merit in pursuing the complaint, e.g., to identify any lessons learnt
- It repeats a complaint that has previously been considered through the complaints procedure
- It is being or has been investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman under section 26(1) of the Local Government Act 1974
- It is unclear
- It is vexatious or frivolous
- Where the subject of complaint relates to events more than one year before the date Chandlers receives the complaint unless:
  - a) Chandlers is satisfied that it would not have been reasonable to expect the complaint to have been made earlier than it was and
  - b) although there had been delay in making the complaint it is still possible to consider the complaint effectively and fairly
- Where Chandlers decides that consideration, or further consideration, of the complaint under these procedures would prejudice the conduct of any proceedings or investigation falling under the following sections a) – d) below:
  - a) the complainant has stated in writing to Chandlers that he is taking or intends to take, proceedings in any court or tribunal
  - b) Chandlers is taking, or proposing to take, disciplinary proceedings against any person connected with the matter complained about
  - c) Chandlers has been notified that any person is conducting an investigation in contemplation of criminal proceedings; or
  - d) Chandlers has been notified that criminal proceedings are pending

Where this is the case, the action being taken under paragraphs a) to d) will be known as a 'concurrent consideration'. Chandlers will advise a complainant in writing why a complaint has been excluded from these procedures and state what the 'concurrent consideration' is that has resulted in the exclusion.

If a complaint is excluded from these procedures, the Council will write to the complainant to explain the reasons for the exclusion.