

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Our aim

QRS is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our clients / participants / employees / interviewers, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- ⇒ Making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- ⇒ We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- ⇒ We deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- ⇒ We respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.;
- ⇒ We learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- ⇒ Resolve informal concerns quickly;
- ⇒ Keep matters low-key;
- ⇒ Enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Preamble

Definition: QRS defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction received in writing (with QRS or with a member of staff) that requires a formal response'.

Purpose: The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

QRS's responsibility will be to:

- ⇒ Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- ⇒ Respond within a stated period of time;
- ⇒ Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- ⇒ Take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- ⇒ Bring their complaint, **in writing**, to QRS's attention as quickly as possible.
- ⇒ Raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of QRS management team.
- ⇒ Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- ⇒ Allow QRS a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- ⇒ Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond QRS's control.

Responsibility for Action

All staff / interviewers and the QRS board of Director's.

Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and QRS maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Monitoring and Reporting

All formal complaints are to be entered onto the 'Company Events & Non-Conformance log' by a Director.

Directors of QRS regularly review all complaints made and their resolution – *to be discussed at management review meetings.*

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

In the first instance, if you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the member of staff / contact who dealt with you, or their line manager, so that he or she has a chance to put things right. If your complaint concerns a Director of QRS, rather than a member of QRS's staff, you should write formally to the individual concerned. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 4 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within 15 working days. If you are unsure which member of QRS's staff to write to, your complaint should be sent to QRS's Managing Director (Kathy Tomlin).

Final Stage

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint, then you can write to QRS's Managing Director (Kathy Tomlin) and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect the Managing Director to acknowledge your request within 3 working days of receipt and a response within 15 workings days.

QRS's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires



more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

These policies supplement your terms of employment but are not of contractual effect. Their purpose is to explain the Company's current policies and procedures, but they may be subject to change without notice if changes are considered appropriate by the Company or if there are changes in relevant legislation.