



DHR INTERIM LTD

COMPLAINTS POLICY

2008

ORIGINAL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

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COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy Statement

The purpose of this document is to record DHR Interim's practice with regards to complaints. The Complaints Policy provides a framework for staff to ensure we respond to complaints quickly, communicate effectively to relevant parties, and promote best practice.

It is the policy of DHR Interim to monitor and review this policy regularly, with the aim of providing satisfactory resolutions to complaints.

Definition of a Complaint

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is deemed as an expression of dissatisfaction, either written or spoken. A complaint can be made by an individual, a group, a staff member, customer; visitor, member of the public or other stakeholder.

Definition of Complainants

Any person who has any dealing or communication with DHR Interim is entitled to register a complaint.

Principles of the Complaints Procedure

DHR Interim operates in an open and transparent manner, and takes complaints against any elements of its service seriously and with due diligence. It is the policy of the business to ensure that:

- it acknowledges that complaints (and compliments also) are a valuable source of feedback, enabling improvement to its services
- all complaints are investigated fully, promptly and fairly
- complaints are dealt with in confidence unless such a complaint should be disclosed to protect personal or public safety
- where the complainant is dissatisfied with the business response, s/he has the right to appeal
- staff are made aware of the complaints procedure at induction and required to read and sign to say they have understood the policy and how it applies to them both as a complainant and when dealing with complaints.
- Customers are encouraged to give feedback during and after any services have been provided to them
- Details on how to submit complaints will be published and available to all via DHR Interim's website. DHR Interim will also endeavour, when reasonable, to provide these details in alternative formats.

Complaints Procedure

The complaints process contains four stages as detailed below. The complainant is entitled to involve an advocate, friend or other person for support at any stage. DHR Interim will provide any reasonable support required to facilitate communication.

Stage 1 (Informal)

Initially when a complaint is received DHR Interim will speak to the individual(s) concerned within fourteen days to try to resolve the complaint informally. Contact details of the complainant must be taken at this stage and kept confidential in line with Data Protection rules. Full names of the complainant, and any employee/agent of DHR Interim implicated must be recorded. All complaints will be logged. Where the complaint is against a member of staff, the member of staff must alert DHR Interim's Director immediately.

Stage 2 (Registering a Complaint)

If verbal discussion as above has not resulted in a satisfactory resolution to the situation, the complainant is able to use stage 2 as below:

1. Outline the complaint details by letter, email, or audio tape and send or deliver it to the DHR Interim correspondence address (available on the website www.dhrinterim.com)

A Director of the company is responsible for dealing with such communication and will arrange acknowledgement of the communication by letter within fourteen working days of receiving the complaint. If the director is absent, then a senior staff member will undertake this task. The outgoing letter will contain the following details;

- name, job title, address and telephone number of the person who will investigate the complaint
 - the date the investigation will start
 - the support which the complainant can receive during the process, e.g. accessible information.
2. The staff member above will then undertake an investigation into the complaint, which will involve speaking to the complainant and any members of staff against whom the complaint has been made. DHR Interim will ensure that a written response is sent to the complainant within 28 working days from the start of the investigation. This response will include the following:
 - details of the investigation
 - a decision about whether the complaint was upheld or not
 - the reason(s) for the decision
 - any redress, if appropriate, which will be offered e.g. an apology, extra assistance or signposting to other sources of advice
 - any other action that may be taken regarding the complaint
 - if it is not possible to provide a full answer within 28 working days, the letter will outline reasons why this is the case and give a date by which a full answer, for the complainant, will be expected to be received by them

Stage 3 (Appeal)

DHR Interim is committed to providing an Appeal Procedure which is open to all complainants. The procedure is as follows;

1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, s/he can note the reasons for this by letter, email, or audio tape within five working days of receiving a formal response from stage 2 above.
2. An Appeals Panel (of up to three members) will be convened to consider the appeal. The Panel is restricted to persons with no previous involvement in the complaint, and may, on occasions, include Associate Consultants of DHR Interim.
3. Members of the Appeals Panel will;
 - read papers relating to the complaint
 - speak to relevant individuals involved with the complaint
 - make a final decision
4. The Appeal Panel Chair will write to the complainant within 28 working days of the appeal date, confirming;
 - the final decision regarding the complaint
 - the reason(s) for this outcome
 - any redress, as appropriate, which will be offered to the complainant e.g. apology, extra help or re-directing to alternative sources of guidance
 - any action that may be taken arising from the complaint
5. If the complainant is still not satisfied following all the steps taken above, s/he is entitled to take the matter further to an external body. DHR Interim will provide details as to which body this is, as needed.

Stage 4 (Review of the Complaints Process)

DHR Interim aims to operate in a responsible and transparent manner. A review of the complaints process is as follows;

1. Once the complainant has been through all stages above, and is dissatisfied that the organisation has followed the process properly and fairly (e.g. giving insufficient opportunity to represent personal views or ensuring all relevant people are involved in the investigation), then the individual can relay the reasons for dissatisfaction by letter, email, or audio tape within 21 working days of receiving the Appeals Panel report to Peter Rowley, Company Secretary of DHR Interim to request a review of the complaints handling process, and not a further investigation of the actual complaint.
2. Arrangements will then be made for a review of the complaint-handling process, and the complainant will be advised as to how this review will be conducted.
3. The outcome of this process review will be final, and will be communicated to the complainant in writing within 20 working days of this appeal, confirming:

- whether or not the procedure has been followed properly and fairly
- the reason(s) for the outcome
- any redress, if appropriate, which will be offered e.g. apology, additional support or signposting to other sources of assistance
- what action may be taken regarding the review

Time Limits

In circumstances where the time limits in all processes within this Policy cannot be met due to unforeseen circumstances, complainants will be notified in writing. The clear reasons for the delay with adjusted timescales will be given by the staff member responsible for handling the complaint.

Recording, Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

DHR Interim will ensure that it is responsible for recording and maintaining an accurate and up-to-date register of all complaints including the procedure taken to address all complaints, and if the complaint has been taken to the Appeals Panel. All records shall be made using formats which are consistent with DHR Interim's intention that its processes are ISO 9000 compliant. This register will be reviewed by the Director on an annual basis to enable identification of any areas of learning and agree actions to prevent such complaints arising in future, as part of the Quality Audit process. Such actions may include:

- staff training
- amendments to existing policies and procedures
- dissemination of new or revised practices, such as the correct method of recording accurate data, alterations to staff tasks as a result of addressing the complaints and integrating responsive improvements into the service

Details of complaints recorded will include the number, causes; outcomes and how underlying problems have been resolved. Where complaints identify the need for urgent and more timely changes DHR Interim will act upon those at the time of identification, and not wait for the annual review.

Recording Compliments

DHR Interim believes it is useful to capture the details of compliments which are received. Any such communication will be acknowledged in writing (by email or letter) by a designated member of staff within fourteen working days. DHR Interim will record and maintain an up-to-date and accurate register of compliments received. This could again result in the following actions being undertaken, such as:

- staff training
- amendments to existing policies and procedures
- dissemination of new or revised practices

DHR Interim reserves the right to use such information positively in published or promotional material, in line with Data Protection.

Policy Review Procedure

As a guide, DHR Interim will review the Complaints Policy at least annually as part of its Quality process. This assessment aims to ensure that the Policy and its procedures continue to best serve the organisation, its employees and all those in any way dealing with or connected to the services provided by the company.

It is essential that the policy remains compliant with any legal requirements. For this reason, it may be necessary to review the policy more often and certainly in response to any legal changes as and when these occur. Responsibility on this aspect lies with the Director to ensure that DHR Interim continues to be legally compliant on issues of complaints, accountability and transparent operation. Additionally DHR Interim acknowledges, the careful handling of complaints is essential, to maintain a positive image and enhance the organisation's profile.

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