

## Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

### Our Aim

PAS 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, partners and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore we aim to ensure that:

- making a compliment or complaint is as easy as possible
- we welcome compliments, feedback and suggestions
- 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 informal mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred

This policy ensures that we welcome compliments and provide guidelines for dealing with complaints from members of the public about our services, facilities, staff and volunteers.

### Definitions

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction about the standard of service we provide.

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction, however it is expressed. This would include complaints expressed face to face, via a phone call, in writing, via email or any other method. All staff should have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an “expression of dissatisfaction” even when the word “complain” or “complaint” is not used.

### Compliment

We are always glad to hear from people who are satisfied with the services we offer. All compliments are recorded, acknowledged, and a copy is sent to the relevant staff and their line manager to provide feedback.

## Complaint

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

## Responsibilities

PAS's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a reasonable and stated period of time, the duration may be dependent on the nature of the complaint;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to the attention of PAS normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with the member of PAS staff relevant to the complaint;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow PAS a reasonable time to deal with the matter; and
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond PAS's control.

## Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and PAS 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 facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

## Complaints Procedure

Written records must be made by PAS at each stage of the procedure.

### Stage 1

In the first instance, the relevant staff member(s) must establish the seriousness of the complaint. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure below should be followed.

### Stage 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the client, partner or stakeholder should be advised that a formal complaint may be made. The following procedure should be explained to them. It may sometimes be appropriate for a different member of staff to undertake this explanation.

- a) A formal complaint can be made in writing and the form below should be used.
- b) In all cases, the complaint must be passed on to [office@pas.org.uk](mailto:office@pas.org.uk). The Operations Manager will handle the complaint (or appoint another member of staff to handle the complaint). In the event of a complaint about the Operations Manager the complaint should be passed to the Chief Executive.

- c) The appointed member of staff, depending on the nature of the complaint, must acknowledge the complaint in writing within one week of receiving it.
- d) The complaint will be investigated. Any conclusions reached should be discussed with the staff member involved and their Line Manager.
- e) The person making the complaint will receive a written response based on the investigation within four weeks of the complaint being received. If this is not possible then a letter will be sent explaining why.

### Stage 3

- a) If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision, then it will be brought to the attention of the Board and a sub-group will be convened.
- b) The sub-group will examine the complaint and may wish to carry out further interviews, examine files and/or notes. It will respond within four weeks in writing. The decision will be final.

# PAS COMPLAINTS FORM

You may use this form to make a suggestion or to make a complaint about PAS.

We would like you to return this form as soon as possible. Please direct it to [office@pas.org.uk](mailto:office@pas.org.uk). An online version of this form is available [here](#).

**Name** .....

**Address** .....

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**Telephone** .....

**Email** .....

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**Date of incident:**

**Approximate time of incident:**

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**Suggestion / Complaint**