

ADROIT/NBS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A] Summary Statement

Adroit/NBS are committed to providing high standards of client care at all times. We welcome opportunities to improve our service even if that arises from criticisms or complaints about our provision. We will always treat anyone who has concerns about the service we have provided with utmost respect, fully investigate allegations made as quickly as possible and respond honestly and with courtesy.

We recognise that on occasion we may make mistakes and in common with everyone, we are subject to human error. Our training and infrastructure are designed to reduce such incidences to minimum and we support our staff to continuously improve.

We will not tolerate abuse or aggression directed towards our staff at any time. This includes abusive and aggressive language and threats of physical harm. We will not tolerate discriminatory language of any kind whether related to race, gender, sexuality, or any other kind. Any complaint made in such a manner will be recorded. The caller will be given one warning to enable them to amend their language/conduct. If they do so, their complaint will be investigated as detailed below. Otherwise, the staff member will warn them that failure to change their language/behaviour will lead to the contact being discontinued and no further service offered at that time.

B] Definition

Within this policy, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided by NBS/Adroit due to failure to deliver the service as described/promised, errors in provision of the service or unsatisfactory behaviour of any kind by any employee of NBS/Adroit or their partner services.

C] Procedure for Complaints from Individual Clients:

1. The following applies to all channels of communication, phone, email, online chat.
2. A written record of the event must be included in the CRM contact notes with the complaint box checked, regardless of whether the client remains anonymous or has shared personal data for us to record. The CRM will automatically transfer this record to the Complaints Log. All progress notes will be recorded in the Complaints Log. Only a summary of the outcome need be recorded in the CRM contact notes.
3. If any staff member becomes aware during a client contact that they have made a mistake, they should acknowledge and explain this immediately and apologise. Correct information should then be offered. Usually, the caller will accept the apology and allow the contact to progress. No further action needs to be taken beyond a record in the contact notes.
4. If the client wishes to continue the contact but would prefer an alternative advisor, every effort should be made to facilitate this, preferably immediately or within an agreed time scale. The manager should be made aware of this.
5. If a client wishes to have contact with a manager, this should be arranged as soon as possible. This should be by phone or email and not webchat.

6. Regardless of whether any specific complaint is substantiated, the client's experience has been unsatisfactory and an apology for this can be offered without agreeing that any error has occurred.
7. The details of the complaint should be recorded and investigated by the manager. The scope of the investigation will include contact with the staff member in question, other staff if appropriate, and phone recordings and CRM and other records including emails.

D] Outcomes of Complaints

8. The investigating manager will inform the complainant of the outcome of their investigation, using the same means of communication as previously chosen i.e., phone, email, or letter.
9. If a complaint has been upheld, this will be acknowledged, and an apology given, and any appropriate remedial action offered. The client will NOT be told of any individual action taken regarding a member of staff, as this remains part of their confidential staff record. Corporate action e.g., training or a policy change can and should be disclosed to the client.
10. In a small company such as NBS/Adroit there is no further level for appeal if the client remains dissatisfied having been informed of the outcome of the complaint. If appropriate to the topic of the complaint, they can be signposted to an external agency e.g. The Office of the Information Commissioner.
11. Complaints from clients raised by Corporate Clients will be included in regular MI reports.

E] Complaints from Corporate Clients or Partner Services

12. All complaints from a corporate client or partner service will be escalated immediately to a director. Investigation and response will proceed as above led by the appropriate director.

F] Complaints about a Corporate Client or Partner Service

13. Complaints regarding a Corporate Client should be signposted to the appropriate manager in that organisation.
14. Complaints about a Partner Service should be recorded in detail and a manager informed. The manager will assess and then discuss with the complainant whether this is an issue than can be resolved informally or needs to become a formal complaint. It is at the discretion of the manager whether they feel that some advocacy on their part will assist in informal resolution, and this can be offered.
15. As there is no contract between NBS/Adroit and the Partner Service, if the client wants to pursue a formal complaint, they should be signposted to the Partner Service's own complaint procedure.
16. Permission should be sought from the client to contact them again in an agreed time frame to check on progress.
17. All complaints about Partner Services will be discussed in review meetings.
18. The manager will discuss with a director whether the client's complaint is of a sufficiently serious nature that the Partner Service may be in breach of their contract with Adroit and the director will take any necessary follow-up action including notification to regulatory authorities as required. Permission will need to be sought from the client to share their personal data with the regulatory authority.

G] General Points

19. The fact that a client has made a complaint, whether upheld or not, will not prejudice any future service to them.

20. If a client persists in voicing a complaint that has not been upheld, a director may make the decision that they have become a vexatious complainant and there will be no further communication on the issue unless new information is offered.

21. The directors of NBS/Adroit will review all complaints monthly to discern any common factors or trends that may need action.

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