

COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

WMS is committed to delivering an excellent service. We believe that people accessing our mediation service have the right to expect high standards. We also ask for feedback from those using our services to ensure that we are continually learning from the work that we do and developing it further.

We are, however, conscious that people will not always be happy with the services we deliver. When this happens we want to know about it so that we can try to resolve problems and learn from them in order to make our service better.

If you are unhappy with any element of our service we would like you to tell us. We want to give you the opportunity to raise issues of concern directly with our Case Managers, the Service Manager or with our Trustees. We are committed to trying to resolve your concerns within the context of our existing policy standards and procedures.

This guide sets out the procedure to be followed.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints can be either informal or formal in nature. A complaint can be an expression of dissatisfaction about any of the following:

- Concern about the lack of an appropriate or effective service
- Unhappiness with the way a service was provided
- Dissatisfaction over the method in which a particular situation was handled
- A claim of unfair treatment or discrimination

The following guidelines are to ensure that complaints are handled consistently, fairly and in the public interest.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

We are committed to dealing with complaints about our service openly. Complaints should be made as soon as possible and normally within 60 days of the event that you are complaining about. Please follow our complaints procedure, which offers you three ways to make a complaint:

Option 1: Informal complaint

We would hope that most complaints could be dealt with informally and hope that people who use our services feel able to raise their concerns with the Case Manager. You can do this in person (having made an appointment with the Case Manager), over the telephone or via

email. We would hope that the majority of (if not all) complaints can be answered in this way. If you would like us to follow up with the mediators, our Case Managers will then raise your concerns with the mediators and respond to you.

If you do not feel comfortable raising the matter informally or you are not satisfied with the response you get from doing this you can use our formal complaints procedure outlined in options two and three below.

Option 2: Formal Complaint

You can contact our Service Manager to make a formal complaint. This can be done over the phone, in writing or by email. The contact details are:

Service Manager
Wandsworth Mediation Service
St. Mark's Durie Hall
Battersea Rise
London
SW11 1EJ

t: 020 7223 7744

e: wms@wandsworthmediation.co.uk

Complaints received formally will be acknowledged by the Service Manager within 3 working days, by phone, email or in writing. WMS trustees will be provided with details of all written complaints and their outcomes at least quarterly.

Option 3: Complaint to our Trustees

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the options above you can contact our trustees to raise a complaint. To do this please write to the following address:

WMS Trustees (CONFIDENTIAL)
Wandsworth Mediation Service
St. Mark's Durie Hall
Battersea Rise
London
SW11 1EJ

All complaints received by the trustees will be acknowledged within 2 working weeks. This complaint will be referred to one or more of our trustees who will have had no prior involvement in any way in the dispute from which the complaint arises.

DEALING WITH A COMPLAINT

Following a complaint the Service Manager and/or trustee will investigate the complaint and in doing so may arrange to meet with you in person or talk with you over the phone. An investigation may be undertaken at this stage. If so, you will be advised of the timescale in which you can expect a response to your complaint, which will not be longer than 60 days.

The Service Manager and/or Trustee will make a recommendation and based on the recommendation decide whether or not further action is required. They will notify you in writing of this decision and will advise if a further investigation will take place.

If you are dissatisfied with our reply, you should contact us in writing within 10 working days explaining why.

If it is decided that further action is required WMS may appoint a Complaints Officer to review the complaint. The Complaints Officer may be a trustee, a panel mediator, or a Case Manager or Service Manager. The Complaints Officer will have no connection with the complaint. The Complaints Officer will act in an impartial manner throughout the investigation of the complaint.

The Complaints Officer will review the results of the investigation and may give you and the other party concerned an opportunity to present additional information concerning the complaint. The Complaints Officer may conduct the review in any manner s/he deems appropriate.

The Complaints Officer will inform you and mediator of the outcome of the complaint, with reasons in writing.

WMS shall maintain records of all written complaints received and any records related to a complaint for a period of two years following the resolution or conclusion of the complaint.

Complaints concerning our commercial mediation service

If you have exhausted our complaints procedure and you are dissatisfied with our final response, you may be able to complain to the Civil Mediation Council (“CMC”). However a complaint may only be made to the CMC on the ground that the commercial mediator is not fit to remain registered. You should contact us in writing and we shall respond within 10 working days explaining how you may appeal to the CMC.

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