



**THE
ADR
CENTRE**

Te Whakatau Tautohe
Huarahi Kē

COMPLAINTS POLICY

THE CENTRE
FOR ALTERNATIVE
DISPUTE
RESOLUTION

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SCOPE

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

This policy concerns the receipt and management of complaints from the public and clients made to or about us, regarding our service delivery.

This policy applies to employees and contractors of the following companies operating within The ADR Centre: ADR Centre Limited, New Zealand Dispute Resolution Centre Limited, New Zealand International Arbitration Centre Limited, New Zealand Family Dispute Resolution Centre Limited, Building Disputes Tribunal (NZ) Limited, Independent Complaint and Review Authority Limited and Lawtech Limited (together, **The ADR Centre**).

Client feedback will help us to improve our decision-making and quality of services. Sometimes this feedback may become a complaint. The ADR Centre will take all complaints seriously and work with clients and stakeholders to resolve them through our formal complaints process.

A formal complaint can be received through any channel by any staff member.

Included in this Policy

This policy will explain:

- our definition of a formal complaint
- principles we will apply when dealing with formal complaints
- how we will deal with formal complaints
- roles and responsibilities
- record keeping.

POLICY STATEMENT

The ADR Centre is committed to continually improving the products and services we provide by welcoming feedback from clients and our community. We want to ensure that any person or organisation using our services or affected by our operations has the right to lodge a complaint.

We value feedback and commit to resolving issues quickly, fairly, efficiently and with courtesy. Rights to confidentiality, access, equity, and transparency shall be maintained throughout the complaints handling process.



The intent of this policy is to communicate and document a complaints management process that:

- provides a means for receiving complaints or feedback;
- encourages the reporting of workplace complaints and issues;
- is easily accessed and practical;
- is understood by our clients and other stakeholders;
- meets the requirements of our business in alignment with our products and services;
- provides for a fair, equitable and timely response; and
- is in compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about your business regarding your staff, services or products that warrants response or resolution.

Complainant

The person or entity that makes a complaint.

Escalation

The process of referring complaints to other persons for additional management action.

A formal complaint is not:

- a request for delivery of routine services, but a complaint may result in a request for service;
- a request for readily available information;
- complaints from one staff member about another;
- matters for which there is a right of appeal and/or legal remedy;
- feedback as part of a formal consultation process; or
- a part of a process that The ADR Centre is obliged or required by statute to apply.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles shall guide our organisation and commitment for managing client complaints. We shall:

- ensure our clients are encouraged to raise concerns about the service or product they are provided;
- accept all complaints from clients, other stakeholders and members of our community;
- recognise the importance of complaints that are submitted to us;



- ensure confidentiality of all parties is maintained throughout the process;
- commit to the resolution of complaints that satisfies all parties as far as reasonably possible;
- endeavour to manage complaints within a timely manner;
- maintain communications with all parties during the process;
- provide employees with training on this policy;
- provide awareness on escalation options if required;
- ensure complainants are not disadvantaged by submitting a complaint under this process;
- ensure management reviews include complaints data to identify improvement opportunities; and
- continually monitor and improve the complaints management system.

PROCESS

Information for clients

The ADR Centre's complaints process will be documented for clients in a publicly available document on our website, when providing our services and upon request.

All clients will be informed of our complaints management process as required.

We shall advise potential complainants:

- how to submit a complaint;;
- who the contact person is at our organisation
- how we will deal with the complaint; and
- how we will advise the outcome of the complaint.

Training procedures

Employees shall receive training on complaints management processes during their induction, and as part of ongoing training.

Managers will undergo training for complaints management and resolution to support clients and others through the complaint process and appropriately respond to complaints in an empathetic manner.

Making a complaint

We accept complaints either in writing or verbally through:

- the employee they were dealing with at the time;



- a Manager or supervisor of that employee;
- the General Manager;
- a Director; or
- an external regulatory body.

Complaints may be made by:

- Submitting a completed [Complaint Form](#) via email, post or hand delivery. The Complaint form is available in hard copy at our office or online from our website.
- Emailing a completed Complaint Form to complaints@adrcentre.co.nz.
- Posting a completed Complaint Form to:

The Complaints Officer

The ADR Centre

PO Box 33297

Takapuna 0740

New Zealand

- Hand delivering a completed Complaint Form to our office:

The Complaints Officer

The ADR Centre

Level 2, 129 Hurstmere Road

Takapuna 0622

New Zealand

- Calling +64 9 871 0333
- The ADR Centre Complaints Officer will be responsible for receiving all complaints and directing them to the appropriate person.

If the complaint is about an employee, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the employee's line Manager, the General Manager or Directors.

Process for complaints management

Written records must be made by The ADR Centre at each stage of the procedure.



Stage 1

In the first instance, the Complaints Officer must establish the seriousness of the complaint. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Stage 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should be advised that a formal complaint may be made, and the following procedure should be explained to them by the Complaints Officer. It may sometimes be appropriate for a different member of staff, such as a member of the Management Team, to make this explanation.

- a A formal complaint can be made either verbally or in writing. If in writing, the [attached](#) form should be used. If verbally, a statement should be taken by the Complaints Officer or any other person receiving the complaint.
- b In all cases the complaint must be lodged in the Complaints Register. In the event of a complaint about the Complaints Officer, the complaint should be passed to a Manager, General Manager, or the Directors.
- c The Complaints Officer must acknowledge the complaint in writing within 7 working days of receiving the complaint.
- d The Complaints Officer will either investigate the complaint themselves or refer the complaint to an appropriate member of the Management Team, the General Manager, or Directors for investigation. Any conclusions reached should be discussed with the staff member involved and their line Manager.
- e The person making the complaint will receive a response based on the investigation within 30 days of the complaint being received. If this is not possible, then a letter must be sent to the complainant explaining the reason(s) why.

COMPLAINTS INVOLVING SPECIFIC STAFF MEMBERS

The Complaints Officer, Managers, General Manager and Directors have delegated responsibility for resolving complaints or disputes involving staff members.

Internal complaints, where a staff member makes a complaint concerning another staff member, will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Discipline and Termination Policy.

External complaints by customers or stakeholders made against a staff member will be managed by the Complaints Officer, who will:

- notify the staff member of the complaint and its nature;



- investigate the complaint and interview persons involved;
- mediate the matter as necessary to reach an agreed resolution; and
- take other appropriate action as they see necessary.

Any disciplinary action against a staff member arising from a complaint will be taken in accordance with the processes contained in The ADR Centre's disciplinary procedures.

COOPERATION IN EXTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS

If any person makes a complaint about The ADR Centre to an external body (including the Police and Ombudsman), the Complaints Officer shall be responsible for liaising with the body responsible for investigating the issue.

The ADR Centre will fully cooperate in any investigation which may take place. This includes participating in early resolution, conciliation, and/or reporting to the body about resolution and corrective actions if required.

RECORD KEEPING

A Complaints Register shall be maintained by the business and kept for a minimum of 7 years after the complaint has been made. The register will be maintained within our records management system and will record the following for each complaint:

- name and contact details of the complainant;
- details of the complaint;
- actions taken; and
- date submitted and date closed.

All correspondence shall be maintained in our records management system. Information shall be treated as confidential, and access restricted to relevant personnel.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The ADR Centre is committed to ensuring that all information related to complaints and their resolution will remain confidential. The privacy of individuals will be maintained, and personal information will only be shared in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The complaints management policy and process shall be reviewed and evaluated every year when management conducts its annual review of our quality system. This will include:

- review of the Complaints Management System;



- corrective actions and improvement opportunities identified to improve the system; and
- forward plans to ensure continual improvements.

