Complaints and Customer Feedback Procedure

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

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1.0 Scope

The NDA recognises that complaints, feedback and suggestions can be valuable aids to maintaining and improving standards of service and operation.

This procedure is designed to:

- set out a clear route for handling complaints about the operations, policies and procedures of the NDA
- ensure complaints are investigated thoroughly and promptly and that the outcomes are communicated in a timely manner
- make efficient use of the information collected as management information so that lessons can be learned
- set out how positive feedback can be captured and distributed

The procedure does not apply in relation to the investigation of staff grievances or harassment matters, which should be handled under HRP18, with contract disputes, which should be handled as prescribed in the relevant contract or with complaints relating to the outcome of a request for information, which should be handled under CSPR01.

2.0 Definitions and Responsibilities

2.1 Definitions

- Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction whether justified or not about the NDA's operations, policies and procedures
- Complainant: Anyone who makes a complaint which is covered under this Procedure
- Customer Feedback Coordinator: The nominated NDA member of staff whose responsibilities are set out in Section 2.2
- Feedback: Any comments received about the NDA's operations, policies or procedures

2.2 Responsibilities

Customer Feedback Coordinator

- the initial contact point for complaints (unless the complaint is made directly to an individual in the organisation)
- ensure the complaints procedure is co-ordinated and managed across the organisation
- monitor complaint handling and ensure responses are made within the timeframes outlined in this document
- maintain a record of complaints and their resolution and provide management information to ensure lessons are learned to improve performance
- initial contact point for receiving feedback and communicating this as appropriate within the organisation

3.0 Procedure

3.1 Oral Complaints

- any member of staff receiving an oral complaint (in person or by phone) should record the name, address, other contact details of the complainant, nature of the complaint and notify the Customer Feedback Coordinator. The complainant should be asked to put their complaint in writing and (if relevant) should be made aware of HRP05 – Whistle Blowing Policy as a more appropriate route

- it should be possible to deal with the majority of oral complaints at the time they are made either by the person receiving them or by referring the complainant immediately to another member of staff. The action taken in response to the complaint and the outcome should be recorded
- details of the complaint and how it has been resolved should be sent to the Customer Feedback Coordinator. If an oral complaint cannot be dealt with immediately, the procedure for written complaints should be followed

3.2 Written Complaints

- any member of staff receiving a written complaint (by letter or e-mail or any other written means of communication) should notify the Customer Feedback Coordinator
- the Customer Feedback Coordinator will inform the Head of Internal Audit who will determine the nature of the complaint and allocate to the responsible Director and/or Departmental Head
- a written acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within two working days
- the responsible Director and/or Departmental Head should assess the complaint and agree a response and/or course of action
- if further information is needed from the complainant to resolve a complaint, this should be requested from the complainant in writing by the Customer Feedback Coordinator
- the outcome of the resolution should be advised to the Customer Feedback Coordinator and sent in writing to the complainant together with details of the appeals procedure
- the Customer Feedback Coordinator and Head of Internal Audit/Head of Legal will consider if the investigation raises issues which should go to the Executive for discussion

3.3 Involving Other Parties

<u>Complaints which may become legal claims</u>

- complaints which have any possibility of litigation should be referred to the Head of Legal
- the complaints procedure should be stopped if the complainant indicates an intention to take legal action in respect of the complaint
- the possibility of litigation should not prevent an internal investigation into the cause of the complaint to uncover any faults and prevent possible recurrence but this should be undertaken in accordance with advice from the Head of Legal

<u>Complaints which may be deemed Whistle Blowing</u>

- where a complaint is received and is deemed to be classed as Whistle Blowing (allegations of fraud for example) then the procedures outlined in HRP05 Whistle Blowing Policy will be followed and this complaints procedure stopped pending the outcome

<u>Criminal Proceedings</u>

- where allegations may constitute a criminal offence, the Chief Executive (or a nominated director in his absence) will be informed and an initial investigation will be carried out, under the direction of Internal Audit. Where the investigation shows sufficient evidence to substantiate the initial allegation, the police will be notified
- if it is deemed necessary to refer a complaint to the police, then the complaints procedure should be stopped pending the outcome of the criminal investigation

<u>Grievance/Harassment Action</u>

- a case for considering a grievance or harassment action against a member of staff can be suggested at any point during the complaints procedure, but will be subject to a separate process of investigation under HRP18 Grievance Policy

Regulators

- relevant complaints will be passed to the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) for consideration. This procedure does not preclude any referrals to or action taken by ONR which retains authority for standards of safety and security

3.4 Appeal Procedure

- if a complainant is not satisfied with the response following the investigation of the complaint, they may appeal
- the appeal should be made to the Customer Feedback Coordinator who should record the appeal and notify the Head of Legal who chairs the Complaints Panel and appoints the review panel team
- the Customer Feedback Coordinator will issue an acknowledgement letter advising the complainant that a panel will review the appeal and the timescales for this
- the appeal will be handled by a review panel made up of a Chairman and at least two independent members who will investigate the complaint again and reach either a new decision or confirm the original decision (in part or in full)
- the staff member who originally handled the complaint cannot be a member of the review panel
- the complainant should be advised of the outcome of the appeal in writing. If the review timescale cannot be met, the complainant should be advised in writing by the Customer Feedback Coordinator
- the Customer Feedback Coordinator and Head of Legal will consider if the investigation raises issues which should go to the Executive for discussion

3.5 Timescales for Resolving Complaints

- oral complaints should be dealt with on receipt wherever possible
- written complaints and appeals should be resolved within 20 working days of issuing the acknowledgement
- complaints which cannot be resolved within 20 working days, must be notified to the Customer Feedback Coordinator, who will in turn notify the complainant explaining why there has been a delay.

3.6 Records of Complaints and Investigations

Any records made during the course of a complaint investigation will be retained for 3 years.

4.0 Feedback

Feedback is always encouraged from our stakeholders and should be sent to the Customer Feedback Coordinator.

5.0 Documentation

Further information can be found in the following documents.
CSPR01 – Information Request Handling Procedure, relating to FOI/EIR complaints
HRP05 – Whistle Blowing Policy
HRP18 – Grievance Policy