

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

Issue Date: 01.07.2023

SUMMARY

1. All staff should actively encourage Guests and other clients to register their complaints or compliments formally with ADAMA by using the complaints form or talking to the Guest Support team.
2. Wherever necessary, staff should assist Guests confidentially to complete the complaint form or wherever the Guest consents to record the complaint.
3. All staff should regard complaints as an opportunity to improve services
4. All staff should respond to complaints positively, without defensiveness or personal animosity. All complaints are made about the organization.
5. All complaints will be thoroughly investigated by the relevant manager. All staff must co-operate fully and swiftly with the investigation.
6. The manager will keep the complainant informed throughout the process of investigation
7. A full response to the complaint will be made within ten working days of the complaint being made.

PURPOSE

ADAMA recognizes that its customers have the right to demand the highest possible quality of service.

This procedure is designed to ensure that ADAMA responds positively to complaints to protect and further the interests of the Guest and utilizes complaints to improve the quality of service.

SCOPE OF THE PROCEDURE

The procedure applies to all customers including service users, funders, external agencies, etc.

Staff should not use the Complaints Procedure to raise grievances against their employer. In these cases, staff should use the Staff Grievance Procedure.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- To acknowledge complaints within three working days.
- To give a full reply to complaints within 10 working days.
- The Chief Executive will compile a Customer Complaints report annually to present trends to staff trustees and Guests. This report will also report on the operation of this procedure.

DEFINITIONS

A complaint is where a service user or external agency feels that ADAMA has given them poor service or treated them unfairly. Any customer can use the complaints procedure where they feel they have a grievance against ADAMA services, standards, or staff.

A compliment is where a service user or external agency wishes to commend an aspect of ADAMA's activity. Any customer can use the complaints procedure to record and acknowledge this.

RESPONSIBILITY

- All staff have a responsibility for helping clients complete the complaints or the compensation form.
- The Chief Executive has responsibility for receiving complaints and compliments and passing these on to the appropriate manager.
- Managers have responsibility to investigate complaints forwarded to them by the Chief Executive, to identify recommended changes in practice and to execute such changes.
- The Chief Executive is responsible for compiling complaints reports, monitoring trends and making changes to practice.

PRINCIPLES

ADAMA welcomes complaints as a useful tool in quality improvement.

In general, we will assume that the customer is giving us accurate information unless there is evidence to the contrary. If we disagree with a customer on facts and

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interpretation we will try to reach an agreement with them, although the final decision must rest with us.

Complaints are made against ADAMA and the operation of its policies, procedures, and instructions, therefore.

- We will always treat complaints professionally without personal recrimination, animosity, or defensiveness.
- We will accept responsibility for complaints to customers as an organization – we will not attempt to blame or exonerate individuals.

HOW CUSTOMERS CAN COMPLAIN OR DETAIL A COMPLIMENT

There is a complaint form that provides customers with the opportunity of making complaints about the organization or to offer compliments. This form will be circulated to Guests at induction and is available from reception.

All clients should be encouraged to use these forms for registering complaints and compliments as they provide the best means of monitoring these issues and using them for service improvements.

Where customers cannot complete these forms for any reason, a member of staff must complete the form on their behalf, ensuring it is signed by the client, or where the client agrees, to make an audio recording of the complaint. Where a client requests help in making a complaint, staff should assist them to complete the relevant forms immediately or at least within one week of the request being made.

When assisting clients in completing these forms staff should give honest feedback if their complaint is outside the boundaries of our policies. Obviously if they still wish to pursue their claim or complaint, they should be assisted to do so.

External agencies should be invited to use the complaints form and these forms should be given to them once contracts are signed, or service level agreements reached. However, external agencies are more likely to telephone staff members with complaints and the staff members can complete the form on their behalf over the telephone. The need to sign it should be waived if the staff member is not faced to face with the customer, unless it is a very serious complaint.

ENCOURAGING COMPLAINTS

Complaints and compliments are to be acknowledged as being very useful in improving our services, particularly in improving them as our customers perceive them. Complaints are to be welcomed and used as a genuine tool for service improvement.

Staff should use their discretion in talking to our clients about registering a complaint. Some clients may be reluctant to do so and should not feel pressured into complaining unduly.

Similarly, staff should take note of customer complaints to promote their own agendas. There are clear mechanisms for staff to register concerns over their work or the service provided to customers.

WHAT WE WILL DO WHEN COMPLAINTS ARE RECEIVED

- All complaint and claim forms should be passed directly to the Chief Executive who will then log them onto the customer complaints database. The Chief Executive will then immediately pass the complaint to the relevant manager to investigate. If it is about a manager, the complaint will be investigated by the Chief Executive.
- The responsible manager will telephone, wherever possible, and write to the customer within 5 working days to acknowledge the complaint or claim and, if necessary, clarify the content of the complaint. A copy of any correspondence or notes of telephone calls should be retained and logged on to the database.
- The responsible manager will then investigate the complaint or claim. The customers' word should be taken at face value unless there is strong evidence to the contrary. While natural justice should be maintained this must be balanced against having a long-drawn-out investigation process.
- The responsible manager must approach the investigation as an opportunity for quality improvement. The responsible manager must act as a representative of the Guest, testing actions and decisions to see if ADAMA held the best interests of the Guest uppermost and whether we failed to serve the interests of the learner and meet their reasonable expectations. Nothing should be taken for granted or on faith.
- The responsible manager will respond in full in writing within 10 working days.
- If there is a delay to this timescale the investigating manager should inform the complainant of the likely timescale and keep them informed.
- The full response to the complaint is likely to include some recommendations of changes to practice and policy. The investigating manager must ensure that such recommendations are fully discussed with colleagues required to implement them and reflected in documentation. The customer has a right to expect to see the recommendations implemented smoothly.
- Details of the outcome must be logged into the complaints database. All documentation should be kept and added to the Customer Complaints file.