



# Complaints Policy & Procedure

---

**February 2024**

**Version 1.0**

## Contents

Our aim.....	3
Definitions .....	3
Purpose .....	3
Responsibilities.....	4
Confidentiality .....	4
Complaints procedure.....	5
Stage 1 .....	5
Stage 2 .....	5
Stage 3 .....	5
If you are still not satisfied .....	5

## Our aim

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

Therefore we aim to ensure that:

- making a compliment or complaint is as easy as possible
- we welcome compliments, feedback and suggestions
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly.

Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly
- keep matters low-key
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred

This policy ensures that we welcome compliments and provide guidelines for dealing with complaints from clients, suppliers, and other members of the public about our services, facilities, staff and volunteers.

## Definitions

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction about the standard of service we provide.

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction, however, it is expressed. This would include complaints expressed face to face, via a phone call, in writing, via email or any other method. All staff should have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an “expression of dissatisfaction” even when the word “complain” or “complaint” is not used.

## Purpose

We are always glad to hear from people who are satisfied with the services we offer. All compliments are recorded, acknowledged, and a copy is sent to the relevant service manager to provide feedback to the member of staff or service.

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

## Responsibilities

R.J. Francis & Co. Limited's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to R.J. Francis & Co. Limited's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff at R.J. Francis & Co. Limited;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow R.J. Francis & Co. Limited a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond R.J. Francis & Co. Limited's control.

## Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and R.J. Francis & Co. Limited maintain confidentiality. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

## Complaints procedure

Written records must be made by R J Francis & Co at each stage of the procedure.

### Stage 1

1. In the first instance, staff member(s) must establish the seriousness of the complaint. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

### Stage 2

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. It may sometimes be appropriate for a different member of staff, preferably a Partner or Associate, to make this explanation.
  - 2.1. A formal complaint can be made either verbally or in writing. If verbally, a statement should be taken by a Partner or Associate, or another senior member of staff.
  - 2.2. In all cases, the complaint must be passed on to Mr Andrew Houston. In the event of a complaint about Mr Houston the complaint should be passed to Mr Robin Francis.
  - 2.3. The Mr Houston, or Mr Francis, depending on the nature of the complaint, must acknowledge the complaint in writing within one week of receiving it.
  - 2.4. One of the above will investigate the complaint. Any conclusions reached should be discussed with the staff member involved and their Line Manager (where applicable).
  - 2.5. The person making the complaint will receive a written response based on the investigation within four weeks of the complaint being received. If this is not possible then a letter must be sent explaining why, and the expected timescale for the full response.
  - 2.6. The Compliance Officer is responsible for ensuring that the complaints procedure is followed in a timely manner, and maintaining records of the complaint where appropriate to do so.

### Stage 3

3. If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision then they have a right to appeal.
  - 3.1. This appeal should be made in writing, stating the reasons for appeal, and providing any new supporting information.
  - 3.2. The complaint will be re-examined and the company may wish to carry out further interviews and/or examine files/notes. They will respond in writing within four weeks. This decision will be final.

## If you are still not satisfied

If you are not satisfied with the final decision you have the right to appeal to our professional body, The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Their contact details can be found at [www.icaew.com](http://www.icaew.com).