



Home Office

AUTHORITY: The Secretary of State for the Home Department

SCHEDULE 26
COMPLAINTS HANDLING

Front End Services (FES) UK

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1. INTRODUCTION AND INTERPRETION OF THIS SCHEDULE

- 1.1 This Schedule describes the Authority's complaints handling requirements that the Supplier is required to meet or exceed during the Contract Term in the fulfilment of the Service Requirements.
- 1.2 In this Schedule, unless the contrary intention appears, each capitalised term shall have the meaning set out in Schedule 1 (**Definitions**).

2. COMPLAINTS HANDLING

- 2.1 For the purpose of this schedule a complaint is that which is received by the Supplier and which relates to the Supplier's service.
- 2.2 The Supplier will devise a complaints handling procedure which the Authority will approve.
- 2.3 In terms of accessibility, the Supplier will offer all Customers a range of convenient and accessible channels (digital, paper, etc) which accommodates the needs of all Customers, by which an applicant can lodge a complaint.
- 2.4 The Supplier will ensure literature is readily available and visible, both throughout the Service Point and online, which advertises its complaints procedure, detailing the process by which to lodge a complaint and complaint handling timescales – which, as a minimum, adheres to the process outlined at Paragraph 2.5 of this Schedule 26 (**Complaints Handling**).
- 2.5 The Supplier shall agree with the Authority a complaints management process which allows for the following complaints handling process;
 - 2.5.1 in the first instance, the Supplier shall ensure a system is in place to receive, record, track and assess complaints received external or via the Authority;
 - 2.5.2 acknowledgement of the complaint being received will be within twenty-four (24) hours () and investigated within five (5) days as to whether the complaint is found to be substantiated or unsubstantiated.
 - 2.5.3 where a complaint is assessed as being unsubstantiated the Supplier will provide a response to the Customer within five (5) working days advising the complainant of the outcome.
 - 2.5.4 following the process outlined at Paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9, if the complaint is substantiated a substantive response will be provided to a

complainant within twenty (20) working days where a complaint has been Substantiated.

- 2.5.5 the Supplier shall carry out 'root cause analysis' to identify the reason(s) for complaints and shall put in place measures to rectify the issue(s) to prevent similar complaints occurring.
- 2.6 The process outlined above in Paragraph 2.5 shall be undertaken and investigated by a team outside the area to which the complaint relates.
- 2.7 The process outlined above in Paragraph 2.5 shall be applied to all Complaints received by the Supplier with the exception of those that come within scope of Paragraph 2.12 of this Schedule.
- 2.8 Where a complaint is assessed as being Substantiated, the Supplier shall undertake an investigation into the reasons and cause of events that led to the complaint. This review will provide the basis for detailing findings and reporting this back to the complainant within twenty (20) working days.
- 2.9 After investigation, any Substantiated Complaint that is upheld must be shared in full, including investigation and findings, with the Authority.
- 2.10 With regard to the process described in Paragraphs 2.8 to 2.9, the Supplier shall undertake an investigation; the investigation shall be carried out by a team outside the area to which the complaint relates.
- 2.11 The above process shall be applied to all complaints received by the Supplier with the exception of those that come within scope of Paragraph 2.12 of this Schedule.
- 2.12 All complaints relating to matters that raise non-compliance with Equality and Diversity Legislation, where the complaint concerns misconduct, assault or potentially risks damage to the Authority's reputation, in the first instance must be referred to the Authority for investigation. In such circumstances the Supplier is not to share findings with a complainant without Authority approval. The Authority shall investigate and submit findings in a report to the Supplier within twenty (20) working days.
- 2.13 The Authority reserves the right to carry out dip sampling of all complaints and the responses given.
- 2.14 Service Credits will be applied as per Schedule 7 (**Performance Levels (KPIs)**) Paragraph 5, and Schedule 14 (**Management Information and Reporting**) Service Reports, for all complaints that are substantiated and upheld. The Supplier shall create, maintain and share with the Authority a complaints action plan which records each upheld, Substantiated Complaint. The Supplier shall, on a monthly basis, review, identify and implement preventative actions to reduce future complaints, for example, training requirements.

- 2.15 Where a Complaint relates to matters outside of the Supplier's services, the complainant should be referred to the Authority through agreed processes with the Authority. The Supplier shall record referral information in the monthly Management Information provided to the Authority within twenty-four (24) hours stating to the Customer that the complaint has been passed to the Authority.