



# Complaints and Compliments Policy

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**Dérive**  
Salford

## **1.0 Introduction:**

1.1 Dérive is grateful for feedback from our customers. Customer feedback is an opportunity for Dérive to improve the delivery of our services based directly on the feedback of our customers. Dérive attempts to get things right first time yet we understand that sometimes we don't get things completely right and if we don't, Dérive will listen to its customers, understand their point of view, correct mistakes and where possible, learn from them. Customer compliments let Dérive know when Dérive do a good job and gives Dérive an opportunity to thank staff and teams for their good work.

## **2.0 Aim / Purpose of the Policy:**

2.1 The purpose of this document is to set out Dérive's policy in relation to managing and acting on customer feedback and complaints.

2.2 The objectives of this policy are:

- To listen to our customers when they have a concern, complaint or compliment about Dérive.
- To ensure that the process for providing feedback to Dérive is simple and straightforward.
- To ensure that customer feedback drives improvement in the business when necessary.
- To use customer feedback as a way of learning more about our customers, their needs and expectations.
- To raise customer satisfaction through delivering a consistent service and making customers aware of their rights and responsibilities relating to customer feedback.
- To support staff/agents/representatives at all levels to understand the value of complaints, listen to customers effectively and take steps to resolve complaints at an early stage.

2.3 "Dérive" is a term which includes any agent operating on behalf of Dérive who will follow this policy. In certain contexts the specific agent roles are mentioned to assist in implementation. Appropriate operational and performance monitoring procedures to deliver the policy are attached in the annex.

## **3.0 Complaints:**

### **3.1 Complaints - What is a complaint?**

3.2 Dérive understands that at times our customers may not always be happy with the services they receive from us. Dérive defines a complaint as:

*"When a customer is unhappy with a service that they have received from Dérive, its agent or one of our contractors and want us to respond or take action"*

### **3.3 What is not a complaint?**

3.4 Dérive does not treat the following as a complaint:

- A comment or series of comments, where the customer is making a suggestion about how we may improve or maintain our service. The relevant Service Manager will consider these.
- A question or series of questions, where a customer is requesting information about a service
- A service request, where the customer is letting us know about a particular issue for the first time, for example reporting a repair or an incident of Anti-social Behaviour or making a request for compensation.
- MP enquiries – when local councillors and MP's get in touch with Dérive on behalf of our customers requesting assistance or information these are addressed by the relevant service manager and are recorded outside of our formal complaints procedure.

### **3.4 Dérive resolution process for complaints:**

3.5 Dérive understands that customers will express that they are unhappy with us in a variety of ways such as:

- Calling the contact centre
- Using the website or our customer portal/representatives
- Speaking to any Dérive employee / representative or one of its contractors
- Sending an email
- Writing a letter
- Using social media
- Visiting the Agent's office

3.6 With every complaint Dérive will:

- Listen to the customer and understand the reasons for their complaint
- Thank the customer for their feedback
- Get all of the facts
- Be clear on what we can and can't do for the customer – we will never make false promises to a customer

### **3.7 Time limit for making complaints:**

3.8 A complaint will not normally be considered if it is made more than six months after the point at which the issue became known to the customer. This is because complaints that happened more than six months ago are often difficult or impossible to investigate in a full and fair manner. However, Dérive will consider complaints exceeding this timescale in exceptional circumstances.

### **3.9 Making complaints on behalf of another:**

3.10 Customers may direct complaints through advocates, relatives or representatives. Once Dérive has established that the person presenting the complaint is acting with the authority of the customer, Dérive will treat these complaints as though they are directly from the customer.

### **3.11 Resolving the complaint at ‘point of call’:**

3.12 Dérive will always attempt to resolve a complaint at the first point of contact, using its normal working practices. Dérive’s agent’s staff are equipped to recognise when a customer is unhappy with the service and give them the tools to resolve any concerns quickly and effectively. Dérive’s agents will equip their staff / representatives to deal with an unhappy customer by:

- Dealing with the customers concerns immediately where possible
- Taking responsibility for the customers concerns
- Being sympathetic
- Listening and understanding the complaint
- Taking ownership of the issue
- Letting the customer know what we will do, when they should expect it to be done and if there is a delay for any reason and the reason for the delay.

3.13 Dérive recognises that every customer interaction of this kind represents an opportunity for Dérive to get crucial feedback on the customer experience and act on it. Dérive agent’s will record expressions of dissatisfaction using the electronic recording system, CRM and they will run regular reports from the system to identify if there are any patterns to customer dissatisfaction and if there is anything that we can address to make Dérive’s customers happier.

## **4.0 Formal Complaints:**

4.1 There are times when Dérive’s attempts to resolve complaints at ‘point of call’ are not sufficient to address the customer’s concerns and it is necessary to investigate these using our formal complaints process.

4.2 A formal complaint can occur when:

- A customer is unhappy about a service that they have received from Dérive or the attempts that Dérive has made to resolve their concerns
- A customer requests for the service that they have received to be reviewed by a manager or the customer has expressly asked for a complaint to enter the formal complaints process
- Dérive representatives has triggered the formal complaints process to reach a resolution with an ongoing customer concern
- A member of staff / representative has triggered the formal complaints process as they feel that a customer concern is not being dealt with appropriately by Dérive.

### **4.3 Investigating complaints (Stage 1):**

4.4 Once we receive a complaint, we will:

- Acknowledge the complaint in writing within 2 working days. We can also acknowledge a customer complaint via email, telephone or through their customer account at the customer's request.
- The acknowledgment will inform the customer of the name of the person who will be conducting the investigation; usually this is the manager that is responsible for the service area which the complaint relates to.

### **4.5 The complaint investigation:**

4.6 Investigating managers will fully investigate the complaint and to do this they will get all of the facts relating to the complaint. They may use one or more of the following investigation tools;

- Approach the customer direct for further details about their complaint that may assist them with the process
- Speak to members of staff involved with the area of service that the customer is complaining about
- Search the agent's Internal ICT systems for records relating to the customer complaint
- Visit the customer's home, communal areas or our estates

### **4.7 The complaint response:**

4.8 Following a complaint investigation, a response will be written by the investigating manager within 10 working days and will include:

- The findings of their investigation against each of the component parts of the complaint
- Whether each of the component parts of the complaint have been upheld or not upheld
- If elements of the complaint have been upheld then what steps the manager will take to correct the mistake where possible
- Apologise when we have done something wrong
- Thank the customer for their feedback about Dérive
- What steps that the manager may be taking to improve their service as a result of the complaint and what safeguards they will put in place so that those mistakes won't happen again
- The next steps that the customer can take if they are unhappy with the outcome of the complaints investigation

### **4.9 Reviewing investigations (Stage 2):**

4.10 Dérive hopes that the complaints investigation resolves the customers concerns but in some cases a customer may be unhappy with the response from the investigation

and if this is the case the customer can request for the handling of their complaint to be reviewed.

4.11 The review process will be outlined in the complaint response letter and review requests should usually be directed to the investigating manager. Customers have 10 days from receipt of the complaint response letter in order to request a review, Dérive may extend this timescale in exceptional circumstances.

4.12 The purpose of the complaints review is a consideration of the initial investigation and not a new investigation. The review is typically conducted by the line manager of investigating manager, usually a service director of the managing agent.

4.13 As with the initial investigation we will:

- Acknowledge the request for a review in writing within 2 working days. We can also acknowledge a customer complaint via email, telephone or through their customer account at the customer's request
- The acknowledgment will inform the customer of the name of the person who will be conducting the review; usually this is the line manager of the manager who conducted the initial investigation, typically a Service Director

4.12 Following a complaint review, a response will be written by the reviewing manager within 10 working days and will include:

- The findings of their review against each of the component parts of the complaint
- Whether any of the decisions made at investigation have been overturned
- Apologise when we have done something wrong
- Thank the customer for their feedback about Dérive
- If Dérive have made a mistake, what additional steps that the reviewing manager will take to correct the mistake where possible
- What additional steps that the reviewing manager may be taking to improve their service as a result of the complaint and what safeguards they will put in place so that those mistakes won't happen again

## **5.0 Misuse of the Complaints Process:**

5.1 The making of malicious or vexatious complaints can be a form of harassment or anti-social behaviour whereby an innocent resident or member of staff is subjected to unfounded exaggerated or dishonest complaints by someone seeking to cause detriment to the individual(s) concerned.

5.2 A vexatious complaint is a complaint without any merit which has been made solely to harass or intimidate another resident or a member of staff. A malicious complaint is a complaint that is false and the intention is to cause harm or damage to another resident or a member of staff / representative.

- 5.3 Whilst Dérive will investigate all complaints in line with this policy, part of the investigation in certain circumstances may need to include the possibility that the complaint falls into one or both of the above categories.
- 5.4 If as part of the investigation, it becomes clear that the complainant is malicious or vexatious the Service Director responsible for the area where the malicious/vexatious complaint relates will consider seeking approval of our agent's Senior Management Team to classify the complainant as vexatious.
- 5.6 If the Senior Management Team decide that someone's complaint is malicious or vexatious a number of actions will be considered including:
- Establishing a single point of contact
  - Removing an individual's implied license to attend our offices
  - Taking legal action under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (nuisance to landlord ground)

## **6.0 Customer compliments:**

- 6.1 Dérive is happy to hear when we have done things right. When a customer shares a compliment with us about an individual or a team we will arrange for that compliment to be shared with the individual or team by their service manager. We also publicise some customer compliments in our internal staff newsletter.

## **6.2 Using customer feedback:**

- 6.3 Dérive values the customer feedback that we receive and we will use this feedback as follows:
- To spot trends from complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction and use this information on a large scale to inform our approach to our services, train our staff and how we direct our resources.
  - Dérive will publish details of how we have improved our services because of learning from complaints.
  - Dérive will use customer compliments to identify cases of excellent customer service and this can inform our approach to how we train our staff and deliver our services.

## **6.4 Collecting customer feedback on the customer feedback and complaints process:**

- 6.5 Dérive will ask our customers if they are satisfied with our complaints handling and we will use this feedback to improve the service. We will continue to compare our complaints service with other organisations to improve the quality of our service.



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