



**USEL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE
GUIDELINES FOR PERSONS/ORGANISATIONS EXTERNAL TO USEL.**

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

The purpose of this section is to provide details of the official versions and controls relating to the management of the Complaints Procedure.

KEY PERSONNEL

Role	Name	Grade	Responsibility
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Owner	Board	-	Approval

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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V1.0	July 2009	Draft
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Complaints Procedure

1. Definition

1.1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that may be presented verbally or in writing.

2. Purpose

2.1. This procedure is for any feedback given by persons or organisations external to Usel.

2.2. To provide a mechanism as to how complaints will be dealt with and provide clarity for anyone making a complaint as to how it will be dealt with and the steps that are taken.

3. Principles

3.1. What our Staff Must Do:

- All staff must inform customers, service users and stakeholders how to complain if they have a reason to complain about our products or services.
- Customers must be informed of their right to complain and the process to be used when initial formal contact is made.
- Staff should state clearly that complaints are welcomed; that they will be investigated thoroughly and fairly, where appropriate redress will be made, and that complaints information will be used to improve services.
- Staff will ensure that complainants are treated courteously.
- Usel will outline the complaints process in all literature or information leaflets produced.
- Leaflets and/or information sheets outlining the complaint process will be written using clear and user-friendly language.
- The complaint procedure, where requested, will also be made available in alternative formats to facilitate specific disability needs e.g. Braille, audio, large print, email etc.
- Customers will be made aware that they can present a complaint informally or formally through either verbal or written means.
- Customers who make a complaint are reassured that they will not be discriminated against in any way because of a complaint.
- Usel will provide a confidential channel for complaining that meet the needs of vulnerable groups. Where appropriate, support will also be offered to those who lack confidence or for those with difficulty

articulating their concerns. Complainants can ask a friend, relative or a public representative to help them with a complaint and they can represent them if they have the complainant's authorisation.

- Usel's internal Problem Reporting Process will track reasons of dissatisfaction with services provided to people who have complained.
- Customer satisfaction surveys will include opportunities to raise their dissatisfaction surrounding services for those who do not wish to use the complaint process.
- Staff will be trained in how to deal with complaints appropriately.

4. How We Will Deal with The Complaint:

4.1. At Usel, we aim to have an effective complaints system to resolve issues, as far as possible, on the spot without the need for a full formal procedure. To achieve this we will:

- Give authority to the most relevant person capable of resolving the issue. This will be the person at the lowest level who can resolve the issue e.g. first point of contact.
- All complaints whether oral or written will be recorded along with the response and outcome.
- If a complaint needs to be passed on to another person the complainant will be notified of the action taken and who they will now be in contact with.
- Written complaints will receive a written response and it will:
 - Answer any questions raised in the complaint;
 - Be factually correct;
 - Avoid jargon;
 - Be as clear and concise as possible;
 - If appropriate, include any redress carried out to resolve the issue;
 - Contain the name and contact number for the person to contact if they are dissatisfied with the response;
 - Be signed by the person responsible for the reply.
- Responses will never be:
 - Evasive or ambiguous.

4.2 Stages of the Complaints Procedure

- **Stage 1:** First point of contact for making the complaint e.g. Employment Officer, Sales Administration
- **Stage 2:** ICT & Compliance Manager
- **Stage 3:** Senior Manager
- **Stage 4:** Chief Executive

4.3 Although the ICT & Compliance Manager has responsibility for ensuring the complaint is dealt with, this may be delegated to other staff members as outlined above.

4.4 How We Will Resolve the Complaint

- **An explanation** - Usel will monitor responses to ensure that they deal with all points raised fully and clearly.
- **An apology** – An apology will be given when a mistake has been made.
- **Action to put things right** – Where appropriate Usel will demonstrate what action will be taken to minimise future complaints of a similar nature

4.5 How a Complaint Can Be Escalated

- As stated above, there are four tiers in which a complaint can be escalated through at Usel.

- **Stage 1: First point of contact**

Where possible the member of staff who receives the initial complaint verbally, will attempt offer resolution on the spot.

- **Stage 2: ICT & Compliance Manager**

- We aim that by providing a full, honest and frank response that the complainant will be satisfied with the initial response at their first point of contact.
- If the complainant expresses dissatisfaction with the initial response, the complainant will be provided with the contact details of the ICT & Compliance Manager.

- **Stage 3: Review by Senior Management**

- If the ICT & Compliance Manager is unable to fully satisfy the issues arisen by the complainant, the complainant will then be advised to contact a Senior Manager, whose name will be included in the original response.

- **Stage 4: Review by Chief Executive**

- If the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction by the Senior Manager the complainant should be advised that they have the right to take their complaint to the Chief Executive Officer.

5. Our Targets for Dealing with Complaints:

5.1. If a complaint cannot be resolved immediately, the complainant will be told when a response will be expected.

- 5.2. The complainant will also be kept informed of progress and given an explanation if deadlines are not met.
- 5.3. Quality of the response will not be sacrificed for the sake of speed. We have set realistic response times that we aim to meet every time.
- 5.4. All written complaints, if not already resolved immediately, will be acknowledged within two working days.
- 5.5. If it is not possible to send a full reply within 10 working days, an interim reply stating when a full reply can be expected will be sent. If necessary subsequent interims will be issued.

6. **If you have Cause for a Complaint**

- 6.1. Usel's aim is to provide a first-class standard of service to our customers, and to do everything we can to ensure that you are satisfied. However, should you ever feel that we have fallen short of this standard and that you can have cause to make a complaint, please contact us immediately.
- 6.2. Usel will deal with your complaint quickly.
- 6.3. If you remain dissatisfied, please contact either verbally or in writing with full details of the issue:
ICT & Compliance Manager
Usel
182-188 Cambria Street
Belfast
BT13 3JH
Telephone No: (028) 9035 6600
Email: complaints@usel.co.uk
- 6.4. If you remain unhappy with the responses at the Stages outlined above you still have the right to contact the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman to ask that your complaint be investigated.
- 6.5. You may do this in the following ways:

By writing to:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Freepost: Freepost NIPS

By telephoning:

Telephone: 028 9023 3821

Textphone: 028 9089 7789

email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Website: <https://nipso.org.uk/>