

Complaints Policy

Version 6.0

Policy Owner: Head of Quality and Compliance

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Table of Contents

Contents

1.0	Version Control	3
1.0	Purpose	4
2.0	Scope.....	4
3.0	Definitions.....	5
4.0	How to Make a Complaint	5
4.1	Making a Complaint by Telephone	6
4.2	Timescales.....	6
5.0	Complaints Procedure	7
6.0	Responsibilities and Implementation	8
7.0	Separate and Dedicated Procedures	8
8.0	Monitoring and Evaluation	8

1.0 Version Control

Version	Author of Change	Date	Reason
1.0	Rabinia Khan Paralegal	April 2018	Creation of policy
2.0	Lindsay Rosul Operations Director	June 2018	Updates
3.0	Louise Patrick Head of People	July 2020	Updates
4.0	Julie Simpson Head of Quality and Compliance	Sept 2020	Fundamental Review
5.0	Barney Markham, Operations Director	Jan 2021	Final review and formatting edits
6.0	Barney Markham Chief Operating Officer	Jan 2022	Updated with general amends and revised escalation contacts

1.0 Purpose

Bloom aims to meet and exceed the expectations of its customers and internal stakeholders however sometimes things do go wrong. When they do, Bloom are committed to providing a simple and effective route through which complaints can be made.

Bloom treats all legitimate complaints very seriously and aim to assess and formally acknowledge all complaints within 24 hours. Where Bloom have made a mistake, we will apologise and try our best to resolve the issues as quickly and efficiently as possible. If managed in the correct way, complaints provide an opportunity to drive improvement and learning within our business.

This policy reinforces Bloom commitment to listening to, effectively responding to, and learning from complaints. It also sets out the procedure for responding to and managing complaints.

This policy applies to all Bloom employees and anyone else representing Bloom in any capacity, for example, temporary agency staff, consultants, and volunteers.

The Complaints Policy aims to ensure that:

- Customers and internal stakeholders with genuine concerns understand our complaints process and feel able to complain. We aim to ensure that our complaints process is accessible and straightforward for everyone, offering extra support for those who need it.
- Complainants are treated fairly and consistently. All complainants will receive a clear and comprehensive response, an apology where necessary and details of how Bloom, where possible, have put things right.
- Bloom learns from complaints to help continuously improve its customer service standards, service delivery approach and maintain its integrity and good reputation.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to complaints about Bloom employees and anyone else working directly for or representing Bloom in any capacity, for example, temporary agency staff, consultants, and volunteers.

Anyone who receives or is affected by a Bloom service or interaction can make a complaint. This policy outlines the approach complainants should follow and sets out what they should expect from Bloom in response.

3.0 Definitions

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by an external customer or internal stakeholder concerning the actions or interactions performed or made by a Bloom representative.

A complaint could, for example, be in relation to:

- Bloom providing incorrect or misleading information.
- A failure by Bloom staff in dealing with a customer/s courteously, professionally, efficiently and / or without bias
- A failure by Bloom to implement one of its policies correctly
- An avoidable or unnecessary delay by Bloom in reacting to a situation
- Issues caused by a Bloom process and /or system.
- A failure to provide a service to the required standard
- Any other unfair treatment by Bloom.

A complainant does not have to expressly say that they wish an issue to be treated as a complaint, if the recipient of the correspondence raising the issue feels that the issue is best being managed as a complaint, it should be. It is however helpful for Bloom that where applicable, complainant's flag their wish that their correspondence be treated as a complaint. Note, it is a decision for Bloom with reference to this policy, whether it does or does not treat that correspondence as a complaint.

Complainants may wish to simply provide feedback or suggest improvements rather than a make a complaint. In such cases Bloom will treat this as routine correspondence and will ensure the comments or suggestions are appropriately acted upon.

4.0 How to Make a Complaint

Complaints can either be provided in writing or verbally and can be made using the following methods:

By telephone

You can call Bloom on 020 3948 9400 during our opening hours of 9:00am and 5:30pm.

By e-mail

Depending on which aspect of our service you are dissatisfied with, you can contact one of our leadership team via e-mail:

For complaints regarding Pro-vide 2.0 or project sourcing activities:

James Hull, Technology Director | james.hull@bloom.services

For complaints regarding project sourcing activities:

Barney Markham, Chief Operating Officer | barney.markham@bloom.services

For complaints regarding invoicing or payment:

Sam Peachey, Chief Financial Officer | sam.peachey@bloom.services

For complaints regarding legal escalations:

Lee Dixon, Legal Counsel | lee.dixon@bloom.services

For complaints regarding contract management, project performance, or any other commercial concern:

Kieran Sullivan, Chief Development Officer | kieran.sullivan@bloom.services

Complaints made via other channels, for example, direct to a known contact within Bloom, will be acknowledged in writing within 24 hours by the recipient, immediately assigned to their line manager as the owner of the complaint, and responded to thoroughly and promptly by the owner of the complaint.

4.1 Making a Complaint by Telephone

The recipient of the complaint will:

- Take clear written notes of the nature and details of the complaint and share the details with the complainant in writing
- Record the name and contact details of the complainant, including telephone number, email address and postal address.
- Record the date and time of the complaint.
- Acknowledge the complaint in writing within 24 hours of receipt.
- Assign the complaint to their line manager.
- Ensure the complaints procedure is followed in all instances.

If a satisfactory conclusion is not obtained by the customer from the above procedure, then the customer has the right to escalate the complaint directly to **Amabel Grant, Chief Executive Officer** | amabel.grant@bloom.services

4.2 Timescales

Complaints should generally be made to Bloom as soon as possible, but always within six months of the incident's occurrence. If it is longer, Bloom may ask for an explanation as to why the complaint was not made within this time frame.

We will acknowledge complaints within 24 hours of receiving it and where possible will endeavour to resolve within 48 hours.

Bloom aims to fully resolve all complaints within ten working days. Where we are unable to fully resolve within the specified ten working days, we will continue to update the complainant every 48 hours, unless mutually agreed otherwise, explaining what is preventing Bloom from resolving the complaint.

The day Bloom receive the complaint is day one. Where we receive it on a non-working day, for example at the weekend or on a public holiday, day one will be the next working day.

5.0 Complaints Procedure

When a complaint is received, the recipient should acknowledge receipt in writing within 24 hours and assign the complaint to their line manager immediately. The line manager should ensure the relevant Management Board member is also informed. The assigned line manager will log the complaint within CRM system and will take ownership of the complaint, through to resolution.

The owner of the complaint will ensure it is investigated thoroughly (with all relevant evidence sought and assessed) in a timely manner. They are also responsible for ensuring there are robust mechanisms within their areas of responsibility for identifying, responding to, and learning from complaints.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the owner of the complaint may refer the complaint for investigation to ensure it is dealt with consistently and appropriately or seek an independent view from a Senior Leadership Team member. In such cases, the owner of the complaint remains the responsible owner, responding within 48 hours, from initial receipt of the complaint and update the CRM system. The following points outline the principles that underpin the investigation:

- Where the owner of the complaint is directly involved in the subject of the customer's complaint, the owner will refer the case to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or a Board member for investigation.
- Where the complaint relates to another Bloom employee, the owner will seek additional supporting information from the employee's line manager. The assigned owner will remain the owner of the complaint.
- Where the complaint relates to a system or process issue, the owner of the complaint will refer the case to the relevant Department Head and will re-assign the Department Head as the new owner of the complaint within the CRM system.

All colleagues must follow this policy, contribute to its effective implementation, and always aim to get things right first time. That includes ensuring complaints are identified, logged accordingly, and responded to thoroughly and promptly in accordance with this policy.

The owner of the complaint will endeavour to resolve the complaint within 48 hours, ensuring that Bloom policy and procedures are followed. If it is not appropriate for the assigned owner of the complaint to deal with the complaint, it will be referred to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Department Head within 24 hours.

Where there is a suggestion of a legal dispute, the owner of the complaint will immediately (within 24 hours) collate all documentation/correspondence relating to the complaint in date order to clearly demonstrate the sequence of events and forward the details to Legal Counsel.

Sequence of activities to be followed:

1. Complaint received, working day one.
2. Where a complaint is received either verbally or in writing, the recipient will.

- a. Take clear notes of the complaint
 - b. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing, within 24 hours
 - c. Immediately assign the complaint to their line manager, as the complaint owner by email
3. The complaint owner will record the detail of the complaint within the CRM system.
 4. The complaint owner will respond to the complainant within 48 hours, from the initial receipt of the complaint and provide outcome of the complaint investigations.
 5. The complaint owner will continue to update the complainant every 48 hours (or as otherwise agreed), where the complaint is unable to resolved within 48 hours.
 6. The complaint owner will inform the complainant of outcome of the investigation including explanations and remedies.
 7. The complaint owner will update the complaint within the CRM system and record the resolution details and date resolved.

6.0 Responsibilities and Implementation

The Head of Quality and Compliance is responsible for the Bloom complaints policy and procedures – and ensuring they are reviewed bi-annually. In exercising this authority, the Head of Quality and Compliance will seek input and approval from the Bloom Board prior to release of the revised policy.

7.0 Separate and Dedicated Procedures

The following fall outside this policy and, if arise, will managed separately:

- In some cases, a complaint may trigger other existing mechanisms, for example, where a complaint relates to the standard of behaviour of a Bloom colleague, this will be investigated in line with the relevant procedures. Bloom will only provide progress updates and outcomes of our investigations where necessary to resolving the complaint.
- In some cases, Bloom may redirect complaints to a third-party organisation. If Bloom intend to do so, we will explain our intention to the complainant and follow data protection rules.

8.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Bloom Senior Leadership Team will monitor and analyse complaints data to ensure Bloom is continuously improving our ways of working and services. This will comprise of:

- A weekly assessment of complaints areas so that trends are identified, and prompt action can be taken to address problems.
- On a monthly basis, circulation of complaints statistics to the wider business.

- An annual report providing an overview of complaints data, performance, themes, and learning points, which will be considered by the Bloom board.