

## Aim and purpose

This guide is intended to help immigration advice organisations handle concerns that their clients may have about the advice or service they have received or are receiving.

Handling client concerns & complaints sympathetically will have several benefits for your organisation including:

- Increased client confidence in the service provided, which can lead to repeat and new business for your firm; and
- The opportunity to resolve concerns and complaints internally and identify and implement any improvements necessary to improve the operations of the advice giving organisation.

### Contents:

1. Steps to take when investigating a client's concerns
2. Template Adviser Investigation finding's letter

## Introduction

Clients may raise their complaint in a variety of mediums – e-mails, letters etc. In whatever way they are brought to your organisation's attention they will need to be dealt with according to your organisation's OISC approved complaints procedure.

Client's complaints need to be quickly acknowledged in writing. In that communication the client needs to be told how long you think it will take to investigate the matter and who will be responsible for the investigation and responding to the client. This will demonstrate to the client that their complaint is being taken seriously.

## Steps to take when investigating a client's concerns

### 1. Investigation including gathering evidence

You should, in conducting an investigation have an open mind and be honest about the findings uncovered. This will help your organisation to learn from its mistakes and put in place measures to prevent repetition.

During the course of the investigation you may wish to consider whether you discuss the client's complaint informally either by telephone or in a face-to-face meeting. Engaging in this way with the client may assist you in understanding their concerns as well as assisting your organisation in resolving the matter by avoiding the need for a formal investigation. If that is agreeable to the client, you should ask them to confirm this in writing.

### 2. Conclusion

The conclusion of your investigation should pull together your findings in relation to each of the client's specific concerns. It is important to refer to any evidence collected during the investigation such as the signed client care letter and attendance notes of meetings and telephone conversations. You may also wish to quote from guidance on the Home Office's website or from correspondence received from the Home Office in relation to you client's

matter to support your findings in respect of each of the concerns raised. All of this material should be referred to in your letter to the client confirming the outcome of your investigation and conclusions reached. In addition, if appropriate, the letter should explain what improvements the organisation has made or will make as a result of the client raising their complaint. A template of such a letter is attached.

If their complaint is found to be justified all or in part, it is often the case that clients will simply want an acknowledgement of what went wrong and offered a suitable remedy. The remedy needs to be proportionate to the mistake made. Sometimes this may only be an apology. However, where there is evidence that the mistake has adversely affected a client's immigration status or their chances of a favorable decision from the Home Office, the organisation should look to do more to put the situation right as well as address any financial loss that the client may have consequently suffered.

Archived

OISC

## Investigation finding's template letter

### Template letter

Dear (*client's name*),

#### Your complaint

I refer to the complaint you brought to our attention on [date] regarding the immigration advice and services provided to you by our organisation. I have investigated this [matter/these matters] in accordance with our organisation's complaint procedure. My findings and conclusions are explained below.

It may help for me to first summarise the concerns you have raised: [list these]

I shall respond to each of these in turn referring, as necessary, to the client care letter you signed dated XXX, which set out your instructions together with other evidence relevant to my organisation's investigation. For ease of reference, I have attached a copy of the client care letter [and other notes such as attendance notes and other communications between yourself and my organisation and with other parties/organisations (e.g. Home Office)] to this letter.

In this part of the letter you will need to explain what enquires have been conducted. For example, if the matter concerned whether documents were lodged with the Home Office in time, you may wish to refer to the Recorded Delivery number issued and the Royal Mail Track and Trace service confirming the date the correspondence was signed for by the recipient.

In the next section you should provide a summary of the outcome of the investigation in respect of each concern the client has raised. If a mistake has been found, it is useful to explain what steps your organisation has taken or will take as a result.

#### Conclusion

The conclusion of the letter should confirm the overall findings. It will need to be made clear whether or not the client's concerns were found to be justified or not all or in part. If the former, the organisation will wish to explain the remedy or remedies the organisation is proposing such as paying compensation and/or taking certain action. The letter should conclude by advising the client that they can contact the OISC if they remain unsatisfied with the outcome of your investigation.

Yours sincerely,

Mr/Mrs XXXX  
(Name of investigating Adviser)