1 Scope

All disputes and complaints relating to the activities of CIBSE Certification Ltd, or regarding the activities of any person or company certified by CIBSE Certification Ltd.

All disputes and complaints are investigated to ensure that the certification schemes are operating properly and that clients are receiving the appropriate level of service.

This procedure shall be made available without having to be requested i.e. on the website.

2 Definitions

2.1 Disputes

Minor disagreements or misunderstandings that are usually easily remedied by verbal (or short written e.g. email) communication and that cause the minimum of disruption. Disputes may not require investigation, corrective or preventive action.

2.2 Complaints

These are more serious events that require investigation and the maintenance of records.

3 Responsibilities

The Certification Systems Manager is responsible for:

- Gathering information pertaining to the dispute or complaint
- Carrying out an investigation or delegating investigation to a more appropriate person e.g. a subcontractor/partner
- Verification of corrections, root cause determination and corrective actions
- Determining the proper response to the complainant after consulting and advising others where necessary
- Advising the complainant of the outcome of the investigation and any actions taken
- Ensuring that any necessary corrective action is taken to prevent reoccurrence e.g. amending the relevant procedure, carrying out training
- Reporting on disputes and complaints to the Steering Group and input at the Management Review meetings
- Refer any complaints that cannot be resolved by the scheme to the Steering Group to act as an independent third party for a decision, please see CCP 102 Appeals Procedure

3.1 Principles

Complaints shall be dealt with in a manner that is transparent, impartial, constructive and timely.

A person that is not directly the subject of the complaint received shall investigate complaints and review and approve all proposed communications to the complainant and the subject of the complaint.

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4 Method

4.1 Disputes

Disputes may or may not be logged.

4.2 Complaints

- Written – complaints will be acknowledged and copied to the Certification Systems Manager, entered into a Complaints Register, CCF 408, and given a unique reference number
- Verbal – will be recorded in writing (on paper, email, etc) and in the Ticketing system and will be forwarded to the Certification Manager, entered into a Complaints Register and given a unique reference number.

4.3 Validation

All complaints will be validated to determine that they are related to the certification services offered by CIBSE Certification i.e. management systems or personnel certification. Validation shall include gathering, recording and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint.

> Note: DLUHC certification schemes only:
> Vexatious complainants may be refused access to the complaints procedure (refer to DLUHC Scheme Operating Requirements (SORs)) for details.

Where the complaint involves activity undertaken by a sub-contract organisation the form and relevant correspondence will be forwarded to that organisation for investigation and response. In any case a copy of all complaints information is held by CIBSE Certification Ltd.

The cost of investigating complaints will be passed on to the party complained about if it is upheld but will be borne by the complainant if the complaint is not upheld at the discretion of the Head of Certification, for example, following a vexatious complaint.

The complainant will be advised by letter or email acknowledging receipt of the complaint and that the matter is under investigation.

Complainants will not be deprived of their legal rights by participating in the customer complaints process.

5 Communication

5.1 Complainant

The complainant will be advised when the complaints process is completed for each complaint received and of the outcome of the investigation unless it would not be appropriate to do so e.g. it would result in a breach of confidentiality.

5.2 Subject of the complaint

The subject of any complaint may be contacted regarding the complaint at any time subject to the principles in section 3.1 above.

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The outcome of any substantiated complaint about a certified person or organisation will be communicated to the certified person or organisation in question at an appropriate time where such communication is appropriate.

6 Timescales

Under normal circumstances the following timescales shall be met:

- All complaints shall be acknowledged within 24 working hours of its receipt
- All complaints shall be responded to in full within 7 working days

Where these timescales cannot be met the complainant will be advised and thereafter kept informed of progress thereafter at suitable intervals, but in any case not more than 7 working days apart.

7 Corrective action

The corrective action process is used to provide records of correction, root cause determination, corrective action (where taken) and the review of the effectiveness of actions taken.

7.1 Review of corrective actions

It may be necessary to perform a review of corrective actions taken in relation to complaints and disputes.

This is especially true where the complaint or dispute is in relation to an organisation holding a management systems certification from CIBSE Certification. In such cases special audits may be planned and performed. The Head of CIBSE Certification, or nominated deputy, will determine the need for such audits.

Where special audits are determined to be required these will be reported to the CIBSE Certification Steering Group.

8 Final Decisions, communication and disclosure

Decisions regarding the outcomes of complaints, and how and when or if to communicate them to the subject of the complaint will always be made by someone not directly involved in its investigation or in any other way involved. Where necessary the complaint may be reviewed by the CIBSE Certification Steering Group for a final decision.

CIBSE certification will decide, together with the subject of the complaint and the complainant, where appropriate whether to, and if so to what extent, the subject of the complaint and its resolution shall be made public e.g. if it is in the public interest, safety related etc.

9 Records

All dispute and complaint records are maintained using CCF 408 Certification Complaints and Appeals log, and may be analysed to help in terms preventive actions, training needs analysis and other continual improvement initiatives.

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