

NCLS Policy on Complaints Procedure	Ref: G1.1 Date: 21.02.01 Last reviewed: April 24 Next review date: April 25
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1. This document explains how NCLS will accept, record, investigate and resolve complaints made about any of its services.
2. Every effort will be made to take all complaints seriously, to treat all parties involved as fairly as possible, to learn lessons and to improve practice.

Standards of Service

3. NCLS aims to provide all its clients with the highest standards of service and client care. If we fail to provide this to you, we need you to inform us so we can try to resolve any problems. We will also learn from them so that we can improve our service.

How to Make a Complaint

4. NCLS will always try to provide you with an opportunity to tell us of your concerns and will work with you to try to resolve them.
5. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of our service you might initially want to discuss this with your adviser, to see if the matter can be resolved quickly.
6. If you have spoken with your adviser or if you do not wish to discuss your concerns with them, you might wish to make a formal complaint either verbally or in writing to the Complaints Officer, Sarah Clack, and who is responsible for handling complaints in relation to all services provided by NCLS.
7. A complaints form (ref.G1.2) is available for you to use if you so wish.
8. The Complaints Officer can be contacted at 14 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich, NR1 1LB, Tel. 01603 496623, e-mail: info@ncls.co.uk.

What Happens Next

9. Your complaint will be dealt with or at least acknowledged within 5 working days of it having been received
10. All complaints whatsoever, whether by way of complaint form (ref: G1.2), correspondence, telephone, or in person, will be passed to the designated Complaints Officer as appointed by the NCLS Board;

11. NCLS will investigate and provide you with a response to your complaint within 14 working days of our receipt of your complaint. If we have to change the timescale for any reason, we will let you know and explain why.
12. NCLS will keep details of your complaint in a central register. We will also create a separate file or section in your case file in order to record details, our investigation and NCLS's response to your complaint.

Investigation

13. Your complaint will be investigated in the following way:
14. The Complaints Officer will look into your complaint, this will include speaking to the staff member or volunteer the complaint is about if necessary.
15. The Complaints Officer will consider the information gathered and any other relevant material (such as the contents of your case file).
16. The Complaints Officer will then prepare a written response, which will be sent to you within 14 working days of our receipt of your complaint (see clause 11 above). This response will set out the findings of the complaint investigation as well as any suggestions for resolving the matter.
17. If you are unhappy with the response received from the Complaints Officer you may ask for your complaint to be addressed by the NCLS Board of Directors who will consider the matter further and reply to you within 15 working days of the matter having been referred to them.
18. During this process, if you have made a complaint about an individual and you have an ongoing case with us, we may assign this to a different adviser.
19. If the situation cannot be resolved and you do not wish to continue to receive advice from us, or we deem it inappropriate for us to continue to assist you, we will ensure that the matter is closed as soon as possible and refer you to either another appropriate advice agency.
20. If your complaint is found to be substantiated, we will take the necessary remedial action wherever practicable e.g. reviewing/revising our procedures, training of relevant staff as appropriate, rectifying any mistakes made if practicable, taking issues up with other agencies if appropriate and considering compensation, always taking into account the obligations and requirements of our professional indemnity insurer.
21. If you consider taking legal action against NCLS, we confirm we have Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) to meet any relevant claims. In accordance with our PII Policy notify our insurers of all complaints made against us.
22. Following the conclusion of the complaint investigation, we will evaluate the issues you may have identified and try to improve our procedures to ensure that they are not repeated.

23. We keep details of complaints on a central record which is reviewed annually by the Director of Operations and Development. Following this review we decide whether action can be taken to improve NCLS's services.

Complaints about our Debt Service

24. If your complaint relates to our Debt Service and you are not satisfied with our response you may complain to the Financial Ombudsman, you generally need to get in touch with them within 6 months of receiving our final response to the complaint (although there are some exceptions to this rule). The contact details are:
Telephone: 0800 023 4567
Online form: <https://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us/complain-online>

More information can be found at: <https://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/consumers/how-to-complain>

Complaints about Debt Relief Orders

25. If your complaint relates to the conduct of a Debt Relief Order Approved Intermediary employed by NCLS and you are not satisfied by the response of the Complaints Officer or subsequently of the Board of Directors, you can take your complaint to Advice UK, as the Competent Authority at the following address -

Chief Executive
Advice UK
WB1
PO Box 70716
LONDON
EC1P 1GQ

26. We will provide you with a copy of Advice UK's Complaints Policy or you can access this at: https://www.adviceuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/AUK-DRO-Complaints-Procedure_April-2014.pdf.
27. If you are not satisfied with the final decision of Advice UK, you have the right to appeal to the Secretary of State. It is the responsibility of Advice UK as the Competent Authority to communicate this to you and to explain how you can make an appeal.

Complaints about our Family Legal Aid Service

28. If your complaint relates to our Family Legal Aid Service and you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint or if you do not wish to complain direct to NCLS, you may at any time complain directly to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). They can be contacted at:

The Cube
199 Wharfside Street
Birmingham
B1 1RN
DX 720293 BIRMINGHAM 47

0370 606 2555

If you have already complained to us and we have not resolved the complaint to your satisfaction, or within eight weeks then you can take your case to the Legal Ombudsman. They can be contacted at:

0300 555 0333

visiting the [Legal Ombudsman website](#), or

emailing them at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

Complaints about the NCLS Immigration Advice Service.

29. If your complaint relates to our Immigration Advice Service and you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint or if you do not wish to complain direct to NCLS, you may at any time complain directly to the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC). The OISC can be contacted at:

The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner
5th Floor
21 Bloomsbury Street
London
WC1B 3HF

Telephone: 0845 000 0046

Fax: 020 7211 1553

E-mail: info@oisc.gov.uk

Website: www.oisc.gov.uk

See also:

F1.9 NCLS Service Standards