

External Complaint & Enquiry Policy

1. Policy Statement

This policy has been established to ensure clarity and consistency in approach to complaint-handling procedures. This policy aims to empower our clients and customers to raise a complaint and be assured of the consideration it will be given by clearly setting out our commitments regarding complaint handling. All complaints and enquiries will be dealt with fairly and objectively by our team.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the key definitions are as follows:

Complaint

A grievance, problem, difficulty, or concern; the act of complaining.

Query

To ask, inquire.

Complainant

The person(s), either client or customer, raising a complaint or query. A client may be an organisation with whom Alertacall Ltd have a professional working relationship, e.g. housing providers. A customer is a resident or service user of a client organisation or a private customer.

Working Days

Working days are defined as Monday - Friday, excluding bank holidays. Alertacall Ltd's business days are 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Complaints Handler

The designated complaints handler is responsible for assessing the complaints log daily and ensuring that any and all complaints are actioned as appropriate to their risk rating. This will be the Operational Client Lead or an individual appointed by the Operational Client Lead. During weekends and public holidays, the role will be assumed by the individual leading the shift, with support from on-call staff.

4. Lodging a Complaint

Our contact centre operates 7 days a week and is staffed between the hours of 0800 - 2200. Outside of those hours, we provide a straight-to-voicemail service, all voicemails and emails will be reviewed upon the commencement of the following day's operating hours. See later sections for contact details.

4.1 By Phone

All clients and customers have the right to contact Alertacall Ltd via our customer support contact centre. This can be done in the first instance by phone. Upon receiving and identifying a call as a complaint, our contact centre will initiate the complaints handling procedure and ensure that all pertinent information regarding the nature of the complaint is gathered. As well as confirming the current contact information of the complainant.

4.2 By Email

All clients and customers have the right to contact Alertacall Ltd via email which includes lodging a complaint. The email should be identified as a complaint, contain the necessary information to assess the nature of the complaint and have sufficient information to be able to contact the appropriate person(s) in response.

4.3 Holding Responses

Holding responses will be provided to all complainants. A holding response is provided when the individual making a complaint or query is responded to by the member of staff receiving that complaint or query. They will receive reassurance that the complaint has entered the Alertacall complaints procedure and that details of the complaint will be forwarded to the designated complaint handler for awareness.

Any complaints assessed as high risk will be assessed by the Operational Client Lead to establish whether or not a further holding response is necessary.

Any complaints assessed as extreme risk will be further responded to by the Operational Client Lead or otherwise appointed individual.

Once submitted to the complaints procedure, the designated complaints handler will then review the situation, and/or the account(s) involved and generate a risk rating used to indicate the necessary speed of resolution, possible actions to be taken or the necessity of escalation. They will then inform the Operational Client Lead as appropriate.

5. Complaints Risk Rating

Each complaint is reviewed and generates a risk rating, determined by the likelihood it has of occurring, and the severity of consequence it poses.

These values are then grouped into four categories:

- Low
- Moderate
- High
- Extreme

		Consequence				
		Negligible 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5
Likelihood	5 Almost certain	Moderate 5	High 10	Extreme 15	Extreme 20	Extreme 25
	4 Likely	Moderate 4	High 8	High 12	Extreme 16	Extreme 20
	3 Possible	Low 3	Moderate 6	High 9	High 12	Extreme 15
	2 Unlikely	Low 2	Moderate 4	Moderate 6	High 8	High 10
	1 Rare	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Moderate 4	Moderate 5

5.1 Low & Moderate Risk - definition

Low-risk is anything with a score of 3 or less. A moderate-risk is anything between 4 - 6. These are both considered to be minor deviations from process and policy and are considered manageable via normal operational procedures.

5.2 High & Extreme Risk - definition

High-risk is anything with a score between 8 and 12. Extreme-risk is anything with a score between 15 and 25. Both high and extreme-risk complaints require thorough investigation and are likely to prompt reviews of current working practices and policies.

6. Investigations

Complaints with a low or moderate-risk rating will not be routinely investigated.

Complaints with a high-risk rating will be assessed for the appropriateness of an investigation by the Operational Client Lead. Complaints with an extreme-risk rating will be investigated by the Operational Client Lead (or appointed person in their absence).

6.1 Turnaround Times for Investigations

Once a complaint/query is received, it is important that it is closed within the expected timeframe for its risk rating. Not all complaints and queries will require a thorough investigation, low-risk incidents for example will likely not require any more than an explanation to reach a resolution. Turnaround times are applied from the point the complaint has been picked up for review by the Designated Complaints Handler, who shall review the complaints log daily.

Low Risk

Low-risk complaints have a turnaround time of 24/48 hours (1-2 working days).

Moderate Risk

Moderate-risk complaints should be turned around within 72 hours (3 working days).

High Risk - partial investigation

High-risk complaints will be assessed for the appropriateness of an investigation. If it is deemed unnecessary to carry out a full investigation, then the turnaround time will follow that of a moderate-risk complaint. If it is deemed necessary to investigate, the investigation will have a turnaround time of 3-5 working days.

High and Extreme Risks - full investigation

Extreme risk complaints will require a thorough investigation into the reasons the issue occurred. This is reflected in the turnaround times for these risks. The expectation is that investigations for high, and extreme-risk complaints will take 3-5 working days to reach response and resolution.

If after 3 working days, a response and resolution have not been reached, a further holding response to the complainant must be provided.

7. Resolution with the complainant

All complaints will be responded to.

Often, **low-risk customer complaints** will need no further intervention than that taken during the initial call for example. Occasionally, for low-risk customer complaints, a customer or their contact will express a desire not to be contacted further. In instances such as this, the complaint will need no further communication with the complainant before closure.

For all other complaints - **three attempts** should be made to contact the complainant via telephone, if necessary, an SMS or email may be sent to establish an appropriate time to contact the complainant.

7.1 Low and Moderate Risk

If after three attempts to call (leaving a voicemail where unsuccessful), we have been unable to reach the complainant, the complaint can be marked as closed. It will be evident that the complainant did not receive a response from the complaint log.

7.2 High and Extreme-Risk

If after three attempts, we have been unsuccessful in contacting the complainant, the complainant should be notified that we have attempted unsuccessfully to reach them and that no further attempts will be made. This communication should detail the complaint identifier so that they can request an update upon receipt. The nature of this communication will vary with whom we are attempting to contact. If we're approaching a customer or contact, a voicemail will be used as standard. A letter could be sent - with sign-off from the Chief Operations Officer.

Once a communication has been sent, the complaint can be marked as closed in the complaint log.

7.3 Client complaints

If we are unsuccessful in reaching the member of staff who raised the complaint, a voicemail should be left each time advising that we have attempted contact to discuss their issue, and requesting them to get back to us. After three phone calls and voicemails have been attempted, an email should be sent to that member of staff requesting contact.

If we remain unsuccessful in reaching a staff member at this point, the issue can be escalated to the Client Relations Team to further and followed through to a conclusion, escalating to the Chief Operations Officer if no engagement has been completed.

7. Complaint Closure

For lower-risk complaints, these will be actioned and closed by the Shift Supervisor team.

For complaints of a higher-risk where an investigation has been completed, a response can be formulated to provide to the complainant to bring the issue to a conclusion. The Operational Client Lead is responsible for generating a response to complaints that require one.

For extreme-risk complaints, the response will be generated by the Operational Client Lead, with input from the Chief Operational Officer.

8. Escalating Complaints

Should a complainant be unhappy with the response and/or resolution they are provided with, if they believe it has not been handled fairly or objectively, they can request their complaint be escalated for review.

The escalation points will be Operator > Shift Supervisor > Operational Client Lead > Chief Operations Officer OR Head of Client Development.

It is the responsibility of the point of escalation to review the complaint independently and assess whether the actions taken to resolve the complaint have been sufficient and fair. It is within their authority to recommend alternative actions and can do so in discussion with the complainant. The end result should be a successfully closed-off complaint.

9. Maintaining the Risk Ratings

Every quarter, the Operational Client Lead, Contact Centre Coordinator, and Contact Centre and People Performance Manager will have a meeting to consider the appropriateness of identified risk ratings based on consequence and likelihood in light of any prescribed mitigation, and frequency at which any given risk rating has been identified in that quarter.

10. Contact information

To lodge a complaint, you can contact us at:

Freephone: **0808 208 1234**

Email: customersupport@alertacall.com

Alternatively, you can text us on **07537414388** (your standard network rates apply)