

Ashford Mediation Service Complaints Handling Procedure

NB: This procedure is to be signposted to potential mediation participants at the outset of the mediator's appointment. A copy of this can be found on the AMS website.

1. Overview

Ashford Mediation Service is committed to providing good customer service to all its clients. We take all complaints seriously and will learn from any mistakes made.

The Service feedback form is the best way to initiate complaints; please use the link here: [Ashford Mediation Service \(AMS\): Feedback Form](#)

Ashford Mediation Service will deal promptly and courteously with any complaint, formal or informal made to the service. The cause of any problem of which a client has complained will be investigated. If appropriate, redress will be offered, and any unsatisfactory procedure will be corrected.

Ashford Mediation Service values the views of clients and will endeavour always to use views in a constructive and responsive manner. We recognise that mediation can be a painful experience for clients, and we will strive to take individual situations into account when responding to comments or complaints about the service. It is therefore appropriate to acknowledge the client's complaint, whether the complaint is justified.

A complaint is defined as an "expression of dissatisfaction." This might include a written complaint or a verbal complaint.

2. Timescale

1st Stage

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the service by Ashford Mediation Service, you can make a complaint. In the first instance you should contact Ashford Mediation Service by email. You should email info@ashfordmediation.co.uk outlining your complaint. On receipt of the complaint an acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days or as soon as is reasonably practicable. This response may be made by telephone to see if the matter can be resolved informally. If the complaint is resolved at this stage, the complaint will be closed. However, if this cannot be done within 14 days, the client will be asked to confirm their Complaint in writing if they have not already done so.

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2nd Stage

Where a Complaint is not resolved at the initial stage, Ashford Mediation Service will within 21 working days of the initial response/acknowledgement, or as soon as reasonably practicable, respond to the client in writing, and will at the same time send full details of the Complaint and any response to it to the Service Operations Director who will undertake a review of the case to ensure that the mediation has been conducted fairly.

The Service Operations Director or the mediator will attempt to resolve the Complaint informally in whatever way seems appropriate to him or her typically by telephone. Where the Service Operations Director or the mediator is able to resolve the Complaint at this stage, the Complaint will be closed.

Final Stage

If the Complaint is not resolved at this stage, the complaint becomes formal. Ashford Mediation Service cannot continue with any Mediation (if it is still ongoing) and the other participants will be informed that there has been a Complaint

If the complaint becomes formal all files and records will be released to the Chair of Trustees to conduct a full investigation. He (she) will endeavour to resolve the Complaint and make written recommendations to the client.

NB: At the conclusion of the complaints-handling process, a complainant may, in certain circumstances, refer the matter to the Civil Mediation Council (CMC). Such referrals are considered having regard to whether the matters raised could amount to Serious Professional Misconduct and could thereby meet the requisite high threshold of seriousness.

Please note that, as a CMC referral relates only to matters which could give rise to Serious Professional Misconduct, this is not a route to compensation, redress, or resolution, and cannot be used to appeal, change, or otherwise alter or overrule the outcome of a CHP.

Further information is available at: www.civilmediation.org/concerns

The decision of the Chair of Trustees is final and there will be no right of appeal.

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