



Sterling Accreditation Limited
Setting the Standard

Customer & Third Party Complaints Procedure

Sterling Accreditation Limited
Heywood Hall
Bolton Road
Pendlebury
Manchester
M27 8UX

t: 0161 727 4303
e: info@sterlingaccreditation.com
w: www.sterlingaccreditation.com



1.0 **Sterling Accreditation Customer Complaint Procedure**

Sterling Accreditation aims to provide a high level of service to its members and customers alike. Where a complaint arises we will deal with it promptly and effectively. Under the Sterling code of conduct Energy Assessors are required to provide all their customers with a copy of their own complaints procedure and the Sterling Accreditation complaints procedure, on request.

If a complaint is made about a defective certificate and the energy assessor cannot be contacted. Sterling will make every endeavour to contact the Energy Assessor on behalf of the customer. If the Energy Assessor cannot be contacted or is deceased then we will take responsibility for replacing the defective certificate on behalf of the customer.

Whether complaints are verbal or written they are to be treated as complaints and not as 'queries.' Once identified as a complaint Sterling Accreditation will implement the following:

- Each complaint to be acknowledged;
- Timescales given to resolve the complaint;
- A named point of contact is assigned to deal with the complaint;
- The outcome of the complaint is recorded;

2.0 **Logging a Complaint**

2.1 All complaints received will be logged electronically in Sterling's CRM (Nexus). A copy of the Sterling complaint form SQAD 7.4.1 shall be attached to a complaint with the status of written.

All complaints will be logged into categories as follows:

- a) Verbal
- b) Written

All complaints will be categorised as follows:

- a) Behaviour of an EA
- b) Behaviour of an EA's company
- c) Behaviour of a Scheme
- d) Timing & outputs associated with a particular EPC
- e) Generic complaint regarding the EPBR and its implementation
- f) Other

All complaints will require the complainant to be categorised as follows:

- a) Customer, which in this context means anybody who owns or lives in, or who otherwise has an interest in, a building or buildings for which an EPC has been prepared
- b) Customer's agent (estate agent, solicitor)
- c) A company who employs EAs
- d) Another Scheme
- e) An EA who is a member
- f) Another EA



- g) Trading Standards Officer, Building Control Officer, or some other individual who has a formal role regarding ensuring compliance with the Regulations implementing the EPBD, the Building Regulations, the Green Deal.
- h) DCLG.
- i) Another interested party not listed above

The information required, from the complainant, in order that the complaint can be acknowledged is as follows:

- Name and address of complainant;
- Contact details: daytime number, mobile number and email address;
- Name or Membership No. of Assessor who carried out the Energy Assessment;
- RRN number of report if available or full address and post code of site surveyed;
- Date the energy assessment was carried out;
- Description of complaint or issue.

2.2 If a complaint is verbal the following steps shall be followed:

- Contact Energy Assessor to requesting the correspondence records associated with the complaint. Failure to provide this correspondence will result in a disciplinary action.
- Issue the Complainant with SQAD 7.4.1 to complete
- To allow the complainant time to complete the paperwork, complaints shall be held open for 3 months. If no completed complaint form is received in this period, the complaint will be closed without further action.

3.0 Vexatious Complaints

3.1 A vexatious complaint is defined as ‘a complainant who brings about a complaint or complaints, regardless of its or their merits, solely to harass or subdue the subject of the complaint ‘

3.2 For a complaint to be declared as vexatious there must be several instances of a complaint by an individual, or by others on behalf of that individual. A single action, even a frivolous one, is not enough to raise a complainant to the Level of being declared vexatious.

3.3 In the event that a complaint has been judged as vexatious, Sterling Accreditation shall advise DCLG of the refusal to accept the complaint along with details of the complaint(s).

4.0 Resolving a Complaint

4.1 Upon receiving a complaint Sterling Accreditation will acknowledge it electronically within 48 hours of receipt of written complaint. The acknowledgment will provide an initial assessment of the issue, potentially identifying a resolution and a member of the Sterling Helpdesk will; where reasonably possible contact the complainant within 24 hours. If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately a written response will be issued by the Quality Manager with timescales on the resolution of the complaint.



- 4.2 Customers are free to exercise their right to make a complaint on the basis that they are not deprived of their legal rights by participating in the Accreditation Scheme's customer complaints process
- 4.3 All complaints that involve apparent criminal activity are reported to the police
- 4.4 Unresolved complaints are referred to an Appeals Panel – see SQAD 7.1.
- 4.5 The Appeal Panel decision is binding on the Energy Assessor, but not to the complainant, who is still entitled to their legal rights

5.0 Key Elements of the Complaints Handling Process for Assessors

- The Complainant is not deprived of their legal rights at any time;
- A Complainant must not incur additional charges or fees as a result of lodging the complaint;
- All complaints are formally acknowledged and documented;
- Each complaint is dated and assigned a reference number;
- Notify the complainant if a complaint cannot be resolved;
- Referral of complaint to a third party if no resolution is agreed.

6.0. Alternative Dispute Resolution Service

- 6.1 In the event that your complaint cannot be resolved through the normal scheme complaints process, you may be referred to one of the following bodies:

Citizens Advice

Tel: 03454 04 05 06

Web: citizensadvice.org.uk

Trading Standards

Tel: 03454 04 05 06

Web: tradingstandards.gov.uk