

## 2 Complaint Handling Standard

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### 2.1 Introduction

Post Office has been on the high street for over 375 years, and we understand that, to remain there, we must understand and listen to our customers. We understand that we fulfil an important role in public life and communities in the UK. Due to our partnerships and stakeholders and time on the British high street many members of the public may feel a sense of ownership over the Post Office. Our aim is to resolve complaints where they may occasionally occur, and where possible, we want to put things right for our customers, re-building trust.

We commit to acknowledge, investigate, adjudicate and respond to Customer Complaints with due care, diligence, and integrity. We will appropriately resolve complaints where errors have occurred and learn from mistakes where they do happen to help prevent reoccurrence.

Customer feedback is constantly shaping Post Office, and we are fully committed to listen and act on feedback, which formally includes our Customer Complaint insights.

### 2.2 Complaint Definitions

Our definition of a Customer Complaint is: customer dissatisfaction pertaining to a product or service provided by Post Office Limited or its Agents, where material distress or financial loss is claimed.

### 2.3 Complaint Redress and Compensation

We will compensate a customer for financial loss incurred as a direct result of Post Office or its agents' actions or inactions which have caused such loss.

Where material distress and/or inconvenience is caused, we will consider an appropriate level of compensation in line with industry standards to attempt to rectify this for a customer. Compensation may not be appropriate in all situations.

### 2.4 Where is Post Office responsible for complaints?

Postmasters are Partners and Agents of Post Office. Although we have over 100 Directly Managed Branches (DMBs), the majority of our 11,500 branches in the UK are owned independently by Postmasters or by one of our many Strategic Partners.

Post Office and its Agents provide many varied products on behalf of its Partners and 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties, who own those products. Post Office is responsible for the sale and distribution of these products or services, but not for the provision and maintenance of the products and services themselves.

#### **Post Office is responsible for:**

- Setting out standards of training and procedure with the products and services we offer to our Agents.

- The eservice and experience delivered within our branches

#### **Responsibility for complaints with other Post Office entities or Agents throughout Post Office:**

- POI products are the responsibility of POMS and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party insurers they contract with. These products are regulated and therefore sit with our insurance business and do not form part of this policy. To refer to POI complaints Policy, customers may visit our website via: [Insurance - Life, Home, Travel & Over 50s | Post Office Money](#).
- FRES is a joint venture between Post Office and Bank of Ireland for its Foreign Currency products and services. As this is a jointly owned product, complaints may sit with FRES, Bank of Ireland and/or Post Office.
- Payzone is a subsidiary of Post Office. Payzone product issues should be referred to Payzone; however, complaints concerning the in-branch experience or the website navigation of postoffice.co.uk are in scope of this policy.

## **2.5 Complaint Handling Procedure**

#### **Customer Complaints can be sent to us via the following channels:**

- Telephone: **0345 722 3344** – Our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) voicemail directs customers who wish to complain online and to email or write to us and then terminates the call. This is not an active contact centre line.
- Email: [csc.complaints@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:csc.complaints@postoffice.co.uk)
- By visiting our website and help and support pages: [Post Office® - Helping You Get Life's Important Things Done](#)
- By writing to us at: 1 Future Walk, West Bars, Chesterfield, S49 1PF.
- By visiting their local branch and speaking with the Postmaster or any member of branch staff.
- Contacting us via Social Media by tagging us:
  - On (X formally known as twitter) **@postoffice**
  - On our TikTok page **@ukpostoffice**
  - By visiting Facebook by searching 'Post Office'
  - Instagram **@ukpostoffice**

For alternative format responses such as Audio, Braille or large print, customers can contact: [alternative.format@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:alternative.format@postoffice.co.uk)

#### **Once we have a customer complaint, we will acknowledge receipt:**

- We will acknowledge receipt immediately if contacted via our website.

- If we are contacted via social media, we will acknowledge the complaint within 2 hours during our operating hours of Monday to Friday 9am-6pm.
- If contacted via email or post, we will endeavour to acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of receipt of this correspondence.
- We will provide customers with a complaint reference number.

**We may ask for more information or need to speak with a customer:**

We commit to fully review and understand what has happened as part of our complaint investigation. If we reach out to a customer after receiving their complaint, it will be by their preferred method of contact, to move the complaint forwards or to bring the complaint to resolution.

**We will fairly investigate complaints:**

We commit to investigate complaints with the Customer Support Centre Values as referred to in this policy in section 6.1 and by following three core principles:

- To advocate for our customers, stepping into their shoes and trying to see things from their point of view.
- To use our product and service knowledge, provided by 3<sup>rd</sup> parties, partners and any other business rules dictating how a service or product should operate.
- To seek out the evidence available, this could be provided by a customer, partner, 3<sup>rd</sup> party or Agent and system audit trails, CCTV, receipts, by speaking to the Postmaster or our field teams etc.

Using all of the above, we will piece together a fair picture of what happened and adjudicate the complaint.

**We will adjudicate complaints and deliver a fair outcome.**

Through a thorough investigation, we will communicate to customers one of the following outcomes and what the resolution to their individual complaint is:

- **Support** – this means we agree that an error by Post Office has occurred and we need to remediate the issue. This could be feedback and training or other appropriate remediation. This is an acknowledgement of fault for Post Office and may not relate to a Postmaster.
- **Unable to Support** – this means, although dissatisfaction has occurred, Post Office is unable to accept liability in this instance and is therefore unable to agree that an error was made. Feedback is still captured and used to help improve services.
- **Tactical Support** – This outcome may be used internally where there is little to no evidence to support a case either way. We will use this to support a customer's complaint and feed back internally. Should a number of tactically supported cases accrue around an issue, this may be considered when reviewing future cases of the same nature and may change future outcomes to fully 'Support' (where a pattern is identified).

- **No Further Info Received** – if we close a case in this way, it means we required more information from a customer to proceed to an appropriate resolution, and, as this was not received, we had to close the case until further contact with the information requested is received from the customer.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Party Referral** – if we close a complaint like this, it means we have forwarded the complaint to another company, as the ownership of this complaint does not sit with Post Office.

#### **Complaint Resolution:**

Complaint resolution may vary case by case; however, our quality assurance framework helps us to measure how consistent and fair we are across all of our customer interactions.

We will apologise when things go wrong and especially if we are at fault. We will always endeavour to put things right first time.

We fully commit to listen to and act on customer feedback and use this to inform how we do business in the future.

#### **Complaint handling timescales:**

We endeavour to resolve 95% of complaints within 15 working days, but this may be extended for more complex cases.

## **2.6 Right to Appeal and escalate**

If a customer is not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they are able to contact us again, via the same channels of contact as referenced in this policy at section 2.4 with their original reference number.

#### **An Appeal of Complaint case is defined as:**

- A customer appealing a decision where new information or evidence which may change the outcome comes to light. This could be received directly from the customer, or internally.
- The original resolution has not been fulfilled.
- The original complaint has not been fully answered, or points have been missed.

Once a complaint is appealed, it is reopened by our complaint team, re-categorised and then assigned to a different complaint handler for a final review. If the above conditions of an appeal are met, then the complaint is reinvestigated, taking the original investigation into account, and remediating the complaint appropriately.

#### **If a customer wishes to escalate a complaint after appealing a case:**

Post Office Limited and complaints under jurisdiction of this policy are not a member of any external adjudication scheme. Therefore, should a customer remain unhappy after appealing a complaint decision, their next steps are to seek independent advice from Citizens Advice, or legal services, should they choose to do so, at their own cost.

**Citizens Advice Contacts:**

- Website: [Contact us - Citizens Advice](#)
- Telephone: Advice line (England): [0800 144 8848](#)  
Telephone: Advice link (Wales): [0800 702 2020](#)
- Relay UK - if the customer cannot hear or speak on the phone, they can type what they want to say: 18001 then the Advice line or Advice link number.