



## COMPLAINTS POLICY

FSP 15438

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## 1. PURPOSE

In terms of section 17(1)(a) of the General Code of Conduct for Authorised Financial Services Providers and Representatives (“the General Code of Conduct”) a provider must establish, maintain and operate an adequate and effective complaints management framework, in order to ensure the effective resolution of complaints and the fair treatment of complainants.

The complaints management framework must be based on the following outcomes:

- Is proportionate to the nature, scale and complexity of the provider's business and risks;
- Is appropriate for the business model, policies, services and clients of the provider;
- Enables complaints to be considered after taking reasonable steps to gather and investigate all relevant and appropriate information and circumstances, with due regard to the fair treatment of complainants;
- Does not impose unreasonable barriers to complainants; and
- Must address and provide for the matters as contained in Part XI of the General Code of Conduct

The Complaints Policy provides Garden Route Insurance Brokers (Pty) Ltd employees and its business partners with general standards, principles and rules of how to successfully manage customer complaints. The general standards and principles have been developed in line with regulatory and treating customers fairly requirements (TCF), and best practice recommendations.

## 2. ESTABLISHING A COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The organisation is committed towards rendering financial services with the proper due skill, care and diligence and in the best interests of its clients.

Despite the organisation's high service standards there may be instances where a client nevertheless prefers to submit a formal complaint against the organisation. In such instances the organisation will follow the complaints management framework as outlined below.

The FSP is committed towards a transparent and accessible complaints resolution process that is fair to all parties involved. In order to achieve these outcomes, the FSP undertakes as follows:

- The organisation's complaints management framework incorporates the following features, which the organisation is committed to enforcing at all times:
  - Relevant objectives, key principles and the proper allocation of responsibilities for dealing with complaints across the business of the organisation;
  - Appropriate performance standards and remuneration and reward strategies (internally and where any functions are outsourced) in order for complaints management to ensure objectivity and impartiality;
  - Documented procedures for the appropriate management and categorisation of complaints which include expected timeframes and provides for circumstances under which these timeframes may be extended;
  - Documented procedures which clearly define the escalation, decision-making, monitoring, oversight and review processes within the complaints management framework;
  - Appropriate complaint record keeping, monitoring and analysis of complaints, and reporting to the Key Individual on
    - Identified risks, trends and action taken in response thereto; and
    - The effectiveness and outcomes of the complaints management framework.

- Appropriate communication with complainants and persons representing complainants on the complaints and the complaints processes and procedures;
- Appropriate engagement between the organisation and the relevant Ombud;
- Compliance with requirements for reporting to the Regulator and public reporting in accordance with part XI of the General Code of Conduct.
- A process for managing complaints relating to the organisation's representatives and service suppliers, insofar as such complaints relate to services provided in connection with the organisation's financial products, financial services or related services, which process will:
  - Enable the organisation to reasonably satisfy itself that the representative or service supplier has adequate complaints management processes in place to ensure the fair treatment of complainants;
  - Provide for the monitoring and analysis by the organisation of aggregated complaints data in relation to the complaints received by its representatives and service suppliers and their outcomes;
  - Include effective referral processes between the organisation and its representatives and service suppliers for handling and monitoring complaints that are submitted directly to either of them and require referral to the other for resolution; and
  - Include processes to ensure that complainants are appropriately informed of the process being followed and the outcome of the complaint.
- The organisation will regularly monitor the complaints management framework.
- The organisation will resolve client complaints by means of a practical resolution process that is managed effectively.
- The organisation will train and empower all relevant staff members in order to facilitate and resolve complaints impartially.
- The organisation will deal with complaints in a timely and fair manner, with each complainant receiving proper due consideration.
- The organisation will take the necessary steps to investigate and respond promptly to a complainant.
- Where deemed necessary, the organisation will appoint an independent mediator in order to resolve the complaint.
- Where the complaint is resolved in favour of the complainant, the organisation will offer the appropriate level of redress to the complainant without delay.
- The organisation will maintain a record of all complaints for a period of 5 years together with an indication of whether or not the complaint has been resolved.
- The organisation will investigate, and where necessary, take appropriate action in order to avoid and prevent similar circumstances which gave rise to the complaint.
- The organisation will ensure the recording of complaints and complaints-related information in an accurate, efficient and secure manner, and will establish and maintain appropriate processes for reporting of complaints related information to its governing body.
- The organisation is committed to ensuring that its complaints processes and procedures are transparent, visible, and accessible through channels that are appropriate to the organisation's clients.

### 3. ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Key Individual of the organisation is responsible for effective complaints management.
- The key individual of the organisation will therefore oversee and approve the effectiveness and implementation of the organisation's complaints management framework.
- The internal complaint review and escalation process may be delegated to a senior Complaint Dispute Facilitator, and any queries relating to the aforementioned process must be directed to same.

#### 4. RESPONSIBLE AND ADEQUATE DECISION-MAKING

- Any person in the organisation that is responsible for making decisions or recommendations in respect of complaints generally or a specific complaint must –
  - Be adequately trained;
  - Have an appropriate mix of experience, knowledge and skills in complaints handling, fair treatment of customers, the subject matter of the complaints concerned and relevant legal and regulatory matters;
  - Not be subject to a conflict of interest; and
  - Be adequately empowered to make impartial decisions or recommendations.

#### 5. CATEGORISATION OF COMPLAINTS

- The organisation categorises reportable complaints in accordance with the following nine categories:
  - Complaints relating to the design of a financial product, financial service or related service, including the fees, premiums or other charges related to that financial product or financial service;
  - Complaints relating to information provided to clients;
  - Complaints relating to advice;
  - Complaints relating to financial product or financial service performance;
  - Complaints relating to service to clients, including complaints relating to premium or investment contribution collecting or lapsing of a financial product;
  - Complaints relating to financial product accessibility, changes or switches, including complaints relating to redemptions of investments;
  - Complaints relating to complaints handling;
  - Complaints relating to insurance risk claims, including non-payment of claims; and
  - Other Complaints.
- Where the organisation considers it necessary to add additional categories relevant to its financial products, financial services and / or client base, it will do so in order to support the effectiveness of the organisation's complaints management framework, and by doing so enhancing improved outcomes and processes for its clients.
- The organisation will categorise, record and report on reportable complains by identifying the category of complaint to which the complaint most closely relates and group complaints accordingly.

#### 6. INTERNAL COMPLAINT ESCALATION & REVIEW PROCESS

- Through the adoption of this policy, the organisation establishes an appropriate internal complaints escalation and review process.
- The organisation is committed to ensuring that the procedures within the complaints escalation and review process is not overly complicated and does not impose unduly burdensome paperwork or other administrative requirements on complainants.
- The internal complaint escalation and review process –

- follows a balanced approach, which bears in mind the legitimate interests of all parties involved, including the fair treatment of complainants;
- provides for the internal escalation of complex or unusual complaints at the request of the initial complaint handler;
- provides for complainants to escalate complaints not resolved to their satisfaction;
- as specified previously, is allocated to the senior Complaint Dispute Facilitator, who is an impartial, senior functionary within the organisation, and is appointed by the organisation in order to manage the internal escalation and review process.

## 7. DECISIONS RELATING TO COMPLAINTS

- Where a complaint is *upheld*, any commitment by the organisation to make a compensation payment, goodwill payment or to take any other action, must at all times be carried out without undue delay and within the agreed timeframes.
- Where a complaint is *rejected*, the organisation will provide the complainant with clear and adequate reasons for the decision and will also inform the complainant of the organisation's escalation or review process. The organisation will also inform the complainant of any time limits relevant to the escalation or review process.
- The organisation will clearly and transparently communicate the availability and contact details of the relevant Ombud to complainants at the start of the relationship, and in relevant periodic communications. The organisation will also display and make available information regarding the relevant Ombud on its premises and website.

## 8. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE OMBUD & REPORTING

- The organisation is committed to transparent engagement with any relevant Ombud in relation to its complaints.
- In light of the above, the organisation will monitor determinations, publications and guidance issued by any relevant Ombud with a view to identifying failings or risks in the organisation's policies, services or practices
- The organisation will maintain open and honest communication and co-operation between itself and any Ombud with which it deals.
- The organisation is also committed to resolving a complaint before a final determination or ruling is made by an Ombud, or through the organisation's internal escalation process, without impeding or unduly delaying a complainant's access to an Ombud.
- The organisation will ensure that it has the appropriate processes in place to ensure compliance with any prescribed requirements for reporting complaints related information to any designated authority, or to the public as may be required by the Regulator.

**COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT KEY PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Principle</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Our commitment</b>
<b>Customer focused</b>	Committed to effective complaint handling and values feedback through complaints	Unhappy with service and looking for where and how to complain	We are committed to seeking appropriate resolution of complaints and will provide you with the complaints procedure which provides contact details and other key information in plain language.
<b>Visibility</b>	Information on how and where to complain is well shown to customers, staff and other parties	Experiencing dissatisfaction	Our staff are trained and skilled to identify and handle complaints and will request the relevant information to escalate your complaint to the correct channels
<b>Accessibility</b>	Making a complaint and investigating it is easy for complainants to access and understand.	Reassurance that the complaint will be addressed.	We will log your complaint and acknowledge the complaint. In the acknowledgement, you will receive the approximate timeframe and steps which will be taken to address the complaint. Once your complaint has been logged, it will be sent to a Complaints Resolution Manager who will be responsible for solving the complaint.
<b>Responsiveness</b>	Acknowledgement in a timely manner, fairly and with due consideration whilst keeping the complainant informed throughout the process	Having a dedicated person to handle my complaint	Once the complaint is logged, it is sent to a Complaints Resolution Manager who will be responsible to solving your complaint. They will keep you informed on the progress and communicate any reasons for delays.
<b>Objectivity and fairness</b>	Customers are dealt with in an objective and unbiased manner to ensure that the complaint handling process is fair and reasonable. All conflicts of Interest will be declared	Fair outcome expectations	All complaints are treated fairly and transparently.
		What happens if the complaint has not been resolved to my satisfaction?	The complaint will be escalated to the Key Individual and Compliance Officer for further investigation. The complaint will not be closed until all avenues have been investigated and possible prejudice due to undue delays, failure to act and unfair treatment has been ruled out.
		Your options if the dispute has not been resolved to your satisfaction	We will give you full reasons as to in writing as to why we are unable to resolve the dispute and inform to refer your complaint to the Ombudsman.