



Widening access to public services

COMPLAINTS POLICY and PROCEDURES

Date ratified: September 2008
Review date: September 2011

1 Scope

This policy applies to complaints made by Cintra's customers and service users regarding the quality of interpreting or translating, behaviour of the interpreter, translator or member of Cintra's staff. Customers' issues about compliance with the contract and/or Service Level Agreement should be made through the contract monitoring procedures.

2 Aims

To ensure that complainants feel confident that their complaint is being taken seriously, complaints are resolved as soon as practicable, complainants are kept informed and any issues raised are used as opportunities to improve the quality of service (where appropriate).

3 Definitions

Customer:

Organisation or individual paying for the interpreting or translation service – e.g. public service provider organisation, voluntary organisation, solicitor, member of the public etc.

Service User:

The person directly using the service e.g. the non-English speaker.

4 Principles

- All complaints will be dealt with fairly and in accordance with procedures.
- All complaints will be treated in a confidential manner, and information will be shared only with relevant parties.
- All complaints will be acknowledged within 1 working day. We aim to investigate and resolve minor complaints within 48 hours. We aim to resolve complaints requiring a more substantial investigation and a formal written response within 10 days. Where this is not possible, for example where the investigation requires obtaining comprehensive evidence such as interviewing various parties, the complainant will be kept informed of progress.
- Complaints involving an interpreter or translator will be handled in accordance with Cintra's Interpreter and Translator Disciplinary Policy.
- Complaints involving a member of staff will be handled in accordance with Cintra's Employee Disciplinary Policy.
- Where the complainant is a public service provider, the service user concerned will not be approached as part of the investigation without the permission of the service provider.
- Cintra will seek expert advice where required to resolve a complaint.
- The complainant's requests during the investigation and subsequent resolution of a complaint will be taken into consideration. Cintra will respect a complainant's request not to use a particular interpreter/translator or restrict their use for future assignments for that complainant. However, it is Cintra's preference that the interpreter/translator be informed of the reasons, and given the opportunity to put forward their case, before a final decision is reached.
- The complainant has the right of appeal if not satisfied with the way their complaint has been resolved.
- A record will be maintained of all complaints.

5 Procedure

- 5.1** Complaints may be conveyed to any member of Cintra's staff on duty by telephone, email or the feedback section of the interpreter's invoice. More serious complaints should be made to the Operations Manager or Chief Executive via email, letter or Complaint Form.
- 5.2** The member of staff receiving the complaint will acknowledge the complaint verbally or in writing with the complainant within 1 working day and log the complaint.
- 5.3** If appropriate to their job role, the member of staff receiving the complaint will investigate it and resolve it as appropriate. If not appropriate to their job role, the complaint will be escalated to the appropriate member of the management team, usually:
- Interpreting – Bookings Manager
 - Translations – Translations Manager
 - Accounts – Accounts Manager
 - Sustained poor performance; more serious complaints etc. - Operations Manager or Human Resources Manager
- 5.4** An investigating officer will be nominated to conduct the investigation.
- 5.5** The investigation may involve interviewing the parties involved, taking statements, obtaining documentary or statistical evidence, or seeking expert advice.
- 5.6** Any investigation and subsequent processes involving an interpreter, translator or employee will be conducted in accordance with the relevant Disciplinary or Managing Poor Performance policy.
- 5.7** The complainant's requests during the investigation and subsequent resolution of a complaint will be taken into consideration.
- 5.8** We aim to investigate and resolve complaints within 48 hours, or 10 days for complaints requiring a more substantial investigation and a formal written response. Where this is not possible, for example where the investigation requires obtaining comprehensive evidence such as interviewing various parties or conducting disciplinary proceedings, the complainant will be kept informed of progress. This tends to be an iterative process with the complainant, who will be kept aware of the steps being taken during the process.
- 5.9** The complainant will be informed of the resolution of the complaint. If the complainant or customer contract manager is not satisfied with the way the complaint was resolved and wishes to appeal, they must do so in writing within 20 calendar days to the Cintra's Chair, stating their reasons for the appeal. The Chair will then consider the evidence, conducting a further investigation if necessary and respond in writing within 20 calendar days. This timescale may be extended, for example depending on the nature of the investigation or if disciplinary proceedings occur. There are no further levels of appeal.
- 5.10** A record will be made of the complaint, investigation and resolution.
- 5.11** The customer's contract manager will be kept informed of complaints through regular, standard performance management reports (as agreed according to the contract) and/or contract meetings.