



***Sterling Accreditation Limited***  
*Setting the Standard*

## **Customer & Third Party Complaints Procedure**

**Sterling Accreditation Limited**  
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## 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 Complaints can be reported by telephone, email, in writing or via Sterling Accreditation's Website:

- Telephone: 0161 727 4303
- Email: [info@sterlingaccreditation.com](mailto:info@sterlingaccreditation.com)
- Online: <https://www.sterlingaccreditation.com/complaints.html>
- In writing to:

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

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. 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 will be dealt with by an independent appeals panel as detailed in section 6.0 Complaint Escalation.
- 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**

- 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. Complaint Escalation**

- 6.1 In the event that your complaint has not been resolved through the normal complaints procedure, Sterling Accreditation will create a Complaints Review Panel, the terms of reference for which are set out in SQAD 7.7. Members of the panel will attend a meeting where a representative of Sterling Accreditation will be present however they will not have voting rights.
- 6.2 All complaints must be submitted in writing and following the process as detailed in this document.
- 6.3 The Complaints Review Panel will arbitrate between the complainant and Sterling Accreditation and will provide a fair and unbiased decision on the complaint.

#### **7.0 Additional Support**

- 7.1 In the event that are unable to provide you with a satisfactory resolution to your complaint, we may refer you and or your complaint to the following bodies for the matter to be fully evaluated.



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Citizens Advice

**Tel:** 03454 04 05 06

**Web:** [citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk)

Trading Standards

**Tel:** 03454 04 05 06

**Web:** [tradingstandards.gov.uk](http://tradingstandards.gov.uk)