

## Complaints: FourthLine company policy and procedure

### Policy brief & purpose

FourthLine is committed to providing a quality service for its clients, customers and candidates and working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our clients, candidates, customers, and stakeholders, and by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

This Policy and associated procedures provide a mechanism for stakeholders to contact FourthLine and a standard as to how FourthLine will respond. The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently, and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

### Scope

This policy applies to our company, staff, and clients. It may also refer to suppliers and partners.

### Policy elements

We aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly;
- keep matters low-key;
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.
- An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

### Definition:

FourthLine defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction that relates to FourthLine and that requires a formal response'.

### FourthLine's responsibility:

Our responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;

- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to FourthLine's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in FourthLine;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow FourthLine a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond FourthLine's control.

**Recognising and responding to complaints is the responsibility of all FourthLine's employees.**

### ***Confidentiality***

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and FourthLine maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

### **Formal Complaints Procedure**

#### ***Stage 1***

In the first instance, if you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the member of staff who dealt with you, or their manager, so that he or she has a chance to put things right. If your complaint concerns a FourthLine Director, rather than a member of FourthLine's staff, you should write formally to our Managing Director ([Kieran.maplesden@thefourthline.co.uk](mailto:Kieran.maplesden@thefourthline.co.uk)). In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 4 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within 15 working days.

Our contact details can be found on the Contact Us part of the FourthLine website.

#### ***Stage 2***

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint, then you can write to FourthLine's Managing Director and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect the Chief Executive to acknowledge your request within 4 working days of receipt and a response within 15 working days.

FourthLine's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

For any questions relating to this policy, please contact **Ross Molyneux** (Risk Consulting Director).