


Division	Gatwick IRC	 Gatwick IRCs
Document No.	GAT-022	
Document	Requests & Complaints Policy	
Issue		


Requests & Complaints

DATE EFFECTIVE FROM:

CONTACT POINT: Support Services Manager

RESPONSIBLE MANAGER: Centre Director


Site: Gatwick IRC			Date published	
Owned by: Audits & Compliance Manager			Written by:	M Henderson (Sept 2008)
Approved by: Centre Manager			Date:	
Approved by: Home Office			Date:	
Reviewed date	Comments	Reviewed by	Approved by Centre Manager	Approved by Home Office

Division	Gatwick IRC	 Gatwick IRCs
Document No.	GAT-022	
Document	Requests & Complaints Policy	
Issue		

Reviewed date	Comments	Reviewed by	Approved by Centre Manager	Approved by Home Office
Aug 16	Annual Review: Some comments removed & some added. DSO number updated.	K Goulder & D Haughton		


AMENDMENTS TO POLICY

Amended Section:	Page:	Date	Reason for & Description of update:

Division	Gatwick IRC	
Document No.	GAT-022	
Document	Requests & Complaints Policy	
Issue		

INDEX:

<u>Section</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.	Introduction	4
2.	Policy	4
3.	References	4
4.	Procedure	5-9

Division	Gatwick IRC	 Gatwick IRCs
Document No.	GAT-022	
Document	Requests & Complaints Policy	
Issue		

1. INTRODUCTION


This policy establishes procedures for detainees and visitors to formally file complaints about centre / departmental conditions, treatment, policies and procedures. To ensure that such complaints are reviewed in a fair and expeditious manner and resolved in the best interest of both the complainant and the company.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 The system's purpose is to establish procedures for detainees to make informal oral complaints or formally file written complaints about centre / departmental conditions, treatment, policies and procedures. To ensure that such complaints are reviewed in a fair and expeditious manner and resolved in the best interest of both the detainee and the centre.
- 2.2 Detainees will not be subject to retaliation, reprisal or harassment for use of, or participation in, any complaint submission. Any allegations of this nature will be reported immediately to the Centre Director or their designee.
- 2.3 Complaints, however trivial they may seem, and where justified we will take visible, effective action to resolve them.
- 2.4 The Complaints Coordinator will maintain a register of all written complaints and the outcome thereof.
- 2.5 All complaint forms will be overseen by the Complaints Coordinator.


3. REFERENCES

Contract Schedule D, Section 10.
Detention Services Order 03/2015 – Handling a Complaint
Operating Standard – Complaint / Request procedures


Division	Gatwick IRC	
Document No.	GAT-022	
Document	Requests & Complaints Policy	
Issue		

4. PROCEDURE


- 4.1 The Centre Director will provide each detainee with guidance within the House Rules on how to make an informal complaint or to apply for and complete a complaint form. Detainees will also be given advice on the confidential access process. This will also describe the process of administering and responding to a complaint. It will inform the detainee that a complaint should be submitted after they have discussed the issues with supervisory staff, or staff in the relevant location, and that failure to do so may lead to being asked to follow such procedures unless the complaint is about a member of staff. House Rules and complaint forms will be available and printed in designated languages.
- 4.2 While internal complaints will be accepted in any format that a detainee elects to use, including oral, forms will be freely available about the centre.
- 4.3 The detainee will receive an acknowledgment within 48 hours of the complaint being allocated to us, and in this acknowledgment it will state the target date given by the Home Office – Detention Services. The target date given on the email from Detention Services will usually be 20 working days from when they received and logged the complaint. The detainee will receive a copy of the response and in the event that they remain unsatisfied, they will be invited to appeal, in confidence, to the Prison & Probation Ombudsman.
- 4.4 While a detainee may not submit a complaint on behalf of another detainee, assistance from a staff member or another detainee may be provided when necessary to assist in the preparation of the oral and / or written complaints. When someone other than the complainant completes a complaint form, this should be noted on it.
- 4.5 There will be a Complaints Coordinator whose responsibilities will include overall coordination of the complaints procedure. This individual will be responsible for ensuring the duties outlined herein are completed. They will read all replies and examine details of investigations before answers are sent out.
- 4.6 Complaints against or about the conduct of a member of staff, made by a detainee or visitor, will be referred to the Professional Standards Unit for consideration by Detention Services.

Division	Gatwick IRC	
Document No.	GAT-022	
Document	Requests & Complaints Policy	
Issue		

- 4.7 The work of the Home Office, the IMB and its secretariat will be facilitated and confidential access will be made available to detainees. The contractor shall, for example, place a secure letter box (to which only the IMB has a key) in each residential unit.
- 4.8 The complaint procedure will be available for scrutiny by any independent body appointed by the authority.
- 4.9 The detainees will be able to exercise their rights with regard to correspondence / approach to the European Court of Human Rights, MPs and other appropriate bodies. The contractor shall, on request, supply details of the addresses of such bodies, to detainees.
- 4.10 All staff will be warned that it is a serious disciplinary offence to interfere in any way with a detainee's complaint or representation. Any requests or representations from detainees addressed to the authority, Home Office, can be deposited in a locked mailbox to which only the authority will have a key.
- 4.11 Detainees will be informed that they can choose to contact outside agencies directly by using the postal system or by using the authority's on-site mailbox.
- 4.12 The investigation will be carried out by an appropriate person. In particularly serious or contentious cases, a Senior Manager may be asked to conduct the inquiry.
- 4.13 It is our policy to encourage informal resolution of complaints at the lowest appropriate level and complaints should be, whenever possible, resolved through direct contact with staff responsible for, or with detailed and accurate knowledge of, the particular problem area.
- 4.14 If the complaint is made in a language other than English because the detainee does not speak or write in English, then it will be translated via Detention Services, but as mentioned in the DSO, the responses will only be given in English, but can be translated using the centre's translation services.

Division	Gatwick IRC	
Document No.	GAT-022	
Document	Requests & Complaints Policy	
Issue		

- 4.15 The procedure for confidential access to the Home Office and the IMB is also explained within the detainee house rules. The house rules should also encourage detainees to talk to members of staff if they are unhappy with anything that they have experienced whilst in our care.
- 4.16 Where a complaint is raised by a person other than a detainee or dependent child, such as a visitor, we will proceed as described above. Target times for written complaints will be in line with the complaints formally allocated by Detention Services which is 20 working days. Initially it is our intention to resolve minor complaints by means of informal resolution, but if this is unacceptable to the complainant they will be advised to write to the complaints department.
- 4.17 We will ensure that detainees receive an acknowledgement of receipt of their written complaint within 48 hours of it being allocated to us by Detention Services. Detainees will also be provided with a response within 20 working days of when Detention Services received and logged the complaint (this date will be stipulated in the email when we are allocated the complaint and is in line with the DSO).
- 4.18 We will ensure that all complaints of alleged racial discrimination are brought to the attention of the Race Relations Diversity Manager, and that they will investigate all such complaints.
- 4.19 The Complaints Coordinator will attend the Senior Management Team Meetings when necessary and will appraise the team members of the ongoing progress of current requests and complaints. In extreme cases, where a Senior Manager is implicated in an alleged complaint, the Complaints Coordinator will meet with the Centre Director privately and the matter will be dealt with in confidence.
- 4.20 The Centre Director will allocate a duty of "Complaints Coordinator". The post holder will act as a first point of contact in the matter of requests and complaints and will instigate a logging and tracking system, which will involve:
- Entering complaints on the central Complaints Register, with the reference number (given by Detention Services), the complainant's name and the date received from Detention Services.
 - Copying outcomes and information with dates, names, numbers, etc. onto the central Complaints Register.

Division	Gatwick IRC	
Document No.	GAT-022	
Document	Requests & Complaints Policy	
Issue		

- Sending copies of the acknowledgment letters, any interim letters and the responses to the Detainee, as well as Detention Services.
- Ensuring the local IMB and Home Office also receive copies of the complaints and the responses.

4.21 The central requests will be held in a secure cabinet next to the Complaints Coordinator's desk. The Complaints Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the log is kept up to date, and that all details and relevant information is entered appropriately and in a timely manner at each stage of the procedure.


4.22 If a complaint cannot be resolved quickly at a local level, or its seriousness warrants deeper investigation, the Centre Director will task a member of the Senior Management Team with undertaking a formal investigation.

4.23 Where an investigation is likely to take longer than the given target date (20 days), the complainant will be sent an "interim" letter by the original target date, as detailed in the DSO.

4.24 All complaints, whether from detainees or other persons such as visitors, will be logged on the central Complaints Register, held by the Complaints Coordinator.

4.25 The complaints log will contain:-

- Details of when the complaint or request was made.
- The allocation of a unique number and the record of the date, time and nature of the complaint.
- Details of who will undertake the investigations or enquiries (Senior Manager allocated to and investigating manager).
- A brief narrative of the outcome and who has authorised it.
- Details of any compensation or penalty points awarded
- When the complaint has been resolved.

Division	Gatwick IRC	 Gatwick IRCs
Document No.	GAT-022	
Document	Requests & Complaints Policy	
Issue		

- 4.26 Completed investigation files will be retained for review by the Centre Director and the authority, as required.
- 4.27 There will be audit spot checks carried out on a regular basis by the Support Services Manager for quality assurance.
- 4.28 The investigating officer's response will comprehensively set out the details of the investigation and the outcomes.
- 4.29 The investigation files will include the details of who was called for interview, together with dates and locations, response letters, a record of interview, findings and any other follow-up information.
- 4.30 The Complaints Register will contain details of the outcome of the investigation and record when a detainee has been informed of that outcome.
- 4.31 A monthly Complaints Report will be compiled by the Complaints Coordinator for the Centre Director and Senior Managers, which informs them of all the complaints received during previous month and offers comparisons on a quarterly basis for trend analysis purposes. The report details the nature of the complaints, their outcomes, which areas actioned the investigations, their categories and the nationalities of the complainants. Statistics from these reports also form part of the Trading Review presentations for the Managing Director.
- 4.32 All complaints logs and investigation files will be available for scrutiny by the G4S Directors, the Home Office, members of the Independent Monitoring Board and any other parties with authorised access to these files.