



## **Our customer complaints policy**

Wellsfield Farm welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds. We have a policy of openness and accessibility to all, including families of children with special needs. We take child safeguarding and health and safety very seriously.

We take customer complaints very seriously and thank our customers for bringing any matters to our attention.

### **The purpose of this policy:**

- To provide our customers with information on how we handle complaints in a timely, effective, fair and consistent manner.
- To provide our customers with confidence that we welcome customer views, feedback, and provide customers with an opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns with regard to our operation.
- To provide customers with confidence that we take the health & safety and wellbeing of our customers seriously.
- To use it as a platform for sharing information about our company plans for improvements, development plans and expansion plans, which might relate to any concerns our customers may have.
- To raise awareness about our company policies that we manage, which include but are not limited to our: Child Protection (Safeguarding Policy), Behaviour Code for Children, Parents and Staff for Child Protection, Facebook & Social Media Engagement Policy and our Environmental Policy. All of these documents can be found on our website – [www.wellsfield.co.uk](http://www.wellsfield.co.uk)
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance and policy on our approach towards customer complaints.

### **1. Application**

This Policy applies to all employees, staff, volunteers, managers, partners, representatives, advisors of the company and our customers and clients.

### **2. Definitions**

A complaint shall be deemed to mean any written statement from a customer or any person acting on behalf of a customer alleging a grievance involving the conduct, business or affairs of our company or any employee, representative, manager, partner or advisor of our company.

Although the definition of “complaint” refers to only written complaints, there may be instances where our company receives a verbal complaint from a client which will warrant the same treatment as a written complaint. Such situations depend upon the nature and severity of the client’s allegations and require the professional judgment of the individual who received the complaint.

A complaint should include at least one of the three following elements:

- Complaint about our company;
- Potential damages or damages suffered by a customer; or
- Request of corrective measures.

For greater certainty, errors that the company accepted to correct are not considered as complaints unless repetition or recurrence causes grievance to a client.

Our Complaint Log is a Database to track key elements of the complaint process and category in order to identify potential trends or concerns and to produce reports.

### **3. Acknowledgement**

When we receive a complaint, an acknowledgment will be sent to the complainant, generally within 7 business days. This acknowledgment normally includes the following elements: the name of the person responsible for handling the complaint; and key elements of our company Complaint Policy.

### **4. Establishing Contact Details**

**It is our company policy that we must receive the name, address, postcode, email address, telephone number, and date/time the complainant visited our premises, before we will investigate their complaint.**

**By obtaining this information, we can be guaranteed we are dealing with a genuine complaint. All customer information will receive strict confidentiality.**

### **5. Complaint Log**

- 3.1 All complaints will be reported to The Manager who has the responsibility to ensure that all complaints are handled according to our policy;
- 3.2 All complaints must be logged in the Complaint Log. The Complaint Log must, at least, include the following information:
  - Date of complaint;
  - Complainant’s name, address, postcode, email address, telephone number;
  - Date and time of event/incident associated with the complaint;

- Nature of the complaint and the circumstances;
- Name of the person who is the subject of the complaint;
- The product or the services which are subject of the complaint; and
- The date and conclusions of the decision rendered in connection with the complaint.

3.3 Complaints in the Complaint Log must be maintained for a period of 7 years, following the resolution date.

## 6. Response Times

Once we receive a complaint, we will reply to the letter, email, telephone call, social media post, on-line review, website contact form submission or verbal communication as soon as we can. We normally respond inside of normal business hours.

Please see our Facebook & Social Media Engagement Policy for detailed information on how we respond to complaints made on social media platforms.

[http://www.wellsfield.co.uk/portals/0/wellsfield\\_farm\\_facebook\\_and\\_social%20media\\_engagement\\_policy.pdf](http://www.wellsfield.co.uk/portals/0/wellsfield_farm_facebook_and_social%20media_engagement_policy.pdf)

## 7. Resolving Issues

We normally try to take conversations offline (to e-mail or a telephone conversation) when resolving issues, however sometimes this can be difficult if the complainant does not contact us privately by email, private message or telephone call, and this can lead to delays for us in being able to resolve issues.

On almost all occasions The Manager will investigate and respond to customer complaints.

We aim to respond to all customer complaints, however on occasion, some customers do not provide the correct information to us so we can respond to them. On some occasions customers provide incorrect email addresses or incorrect telephone numbers on our website contact forms, or have their social media accounts set to private so we cannot contact them directly via private messaging. On these occasions we may ask the customer to contact us by another method so we can progress the matter, if we can.

On occasions we may need to delete posts, comments or reviews on our company Facebook page or other social media platforms if they breach our Facebook & Social Media Engagement Policy, and this can delay this process further, as it makes it even more difficult for us to try and make contact with a complainant, who has not contacted us privately about their complaint, by for example, email, telephone or via our website.

## **8. Observing and Investigating to Establish the Facts**

We will try and be open-minded and understanding about the situation. We may ask specific questions to our customers about an event to establish the circumstances and we will record anything we feel is important. We will always try to take an optimistic approach to the problem and focus on what we can do to help rather than what we can't do.

## **9. Showing our concern**

Whilst we are dealing with a complaint, we will show genuine concern. This we hope will help turn the situation into a positive outcome, to help our customers.

## **10. Communication about progress**

We will try to keep our customer informed on progress of our investigations, even if the problem cannot be solved straight away.

## **11. Taking Responsibility and Putting Things Right**

We will take responsibility for any complaints and solve them as best we can. We will investigate the matter, find out the reasons for the complaint, determine who is involved and make sure we correct it. We appreciate that at the first point of contact, our customers will be looking for answers, and we will investigate and respond as soon as we have completed our assessment. We will also record lessons learnt to try and ensure it doesn't happen again, to maintain our company ethos of continuous improvement.

## **12. Making an apology**

We will generally make an apology for any inconvenience. However in some instances there may be genuine reasons not to do so. In some cases when during or after investigation of a matter and we determine that there has been no wrong-doing or breaching of any regulations or laws on our part, or where in some cases it may not be legally advisable for us to apologise, we may still offer our customers sympathy and we will be empathetic and compassionate about their feelings surrounding the situation.

There may be some situations where we may not offer an apology, and these include situations where a customer is:

- abusive, defamatory or obscene
- fraudulent, deceptive or misleading
- in violation of another's intellectual property right
- in violation of any law or regulation
- trolling or spam

- singular, multiple or organised multiple person attacks on our company, its owners or staff
- factually incorrect information
- posts that detract from specific advertisements, company posts or actual conversations
- otherwise offensive

### **13. Serious complaints**

If we have tried to resolve a problem without success, we may call in a third party such as a legal adviser to help us deal with complaints.