



Subject **Complaints about service providers**
Purpose **For Note**
From **Simon Howard, Head of Professional Standards**

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1. Summary

To note the framework for dealing with complaints about those who provide a service for, or on behalf of, ARB.

2. Open/Confidential Session

Open session

3. Contribution to the Board's Purpose and Objectives

In delivering the Act, ARB's objectives are:

Protect the users and potential users of architects' services: consumers are protected from discrimination or barriers to accessing ARB's services.

Support architects through regulation: any potential barriers in ARB's policies and/or procedures either for architectural students or architects will be recognised and removed; ARB will fulfil its obligations as a public body under the equality legislation.

4. Key Points

- i. As a small organisation with a substantial number of various duties to fulfil, ARB relies heavily on the engagement of third party service providers to perform these duties for it, or on its behalf.
- ii. These duties can range from the investigation of allegations against architects to the auditing of ARB's business. All those providing a service to or for ARB have in place appropriate contractual documentation setting out the level of performance and conduct required.
- iii. All service providers have an ARB staff member responsible for managing their performance. That performance is reported to the Board or its committees periodically.
- iv. Presently there is no documented procedure by which a third party can make a complaint about the conduct of a service provider. Historically such occurrences have been exceedingly rare, but it would be proper for a procedure to be noted by the Board.

- v. That procedure is now set out at **Annex A**. As the performance of service providers is an operation matter, their conduct will largely be considered by members of the Operational Management Group. The one exception to this is the route of complaint about the Chair of the Professional Conduct Committee. It was felt important to retain a degree of separation between the executive and the PCC, so there can be no criticism of the Committee's independence.

5. Resource Implications

There are no resource implications in setting out the procedure of how we will deal with complaints.

6. Risk Implications

Those undertaking services on ARB's behalf are a significant risk to the reputation and effectiveness of the organisation. That risk is managed by appropriate recruitment and appraisal. This procedure provides further support.

7. Communication

ARB needs to have proportionate and robust procedures in place to ensure that those providing a service to the public and professional on ARB's behalf conduct themselves appropriately.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications

All of those responsible for dealing with complaints under the procedure will have been appropriately trained in Equality & Diversity matters.

9. Further Actions

This procedure will be incorporated into ARB's literature and made available to anyone wishing to complaint about an ARB service provider.

The Board will be asked to consider an updated Board member complaints procedure when the Board member Handbook is updated later in 2018.