

PLUMBING INDUSTRY LICENSING SCHEME (SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND)
Delivering Higher Standards - Improving Customer Care
COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The Plumbing Industry Licensing Scheme operates a complaints resolution procedure to help resolve disputes between domestic customers (i.e. customers who instruct a Licensed Plumbing Business or SNIPEF member to carry out plumbing or heating work at their private residence) and members of the Plumbing Industry Licensing Scheme or members of the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF).

This document forms part of the suite of the documents under which Licensed Plumbing Businesses and SNIPEF members have an obligation to work within the Scheme terms. The other documents are:

Customer Service Charter
Warranty Scheme

Copies of these documents are available on request

1. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT ABOUT THE QUALITY OR COST OF WORK UNDERTAKEN BY EITHER A LICENSED PLUMBING BUSINESS OR SNIPEF MEMBER FIRM ?

In the first instance, you should complain to the firm's management. Your complaint should preferably be made in writing and should set out clearly what you feel the issues of complaint are.

You should allow the firm two weeks to prepare a proper response to your complaint.

Once you have received a response you should then consider whether or not the firm's reply has satisfied your concerns. If not, you may either write again to the firm or contact the Plumbing Industry Licensing Scheme's Customer Liaison Officer for advice and assistance.

2. HOW THE COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION PROCEDURE WORKS

The Customer Liaison Officer (CLO) will send you a Conciliation Request Form(CRF) which he will ask you to complete and return. This form will ask you to provide information about the work you had carried out, the cost, who carried out the work and details of your complaints. It will be helpful if you also send a copy of the firm's quotation, your letter of complaint and any response which you may have received.

On receipt of your form, the CLO will write to the Licensed Business or SNIPEF member and ask them to respond to her in writing within ten (10) working days on the issues you have raised.

The Customer Liaison Officer will then attempt to resolve your complaint through a process of mediation and he will maintain contact with you and the business throughout this period.

3. WHAT HAPPENS IF MEDIATION CAN'T RESOLVE THE COMPLAINT?

If the Customer Liaison Officer is unable to resolve your complaint then he can, with your approval, refer the matter to the Plumbing Industry Licensing Scheme Complaints Panel. The Panel, which is wholly independent, is made up of one representative from each of the following organisations:

- *The Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland*
- *Scottish Water*
- *Northern Ireland Water*
- *The Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineers*
- *Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation*

The Complaints Panel is currently chaired by the representative from Scottish Water.

When a complaint is referred to the Complaints Panel the CLO will provide them each with a copy of all the documents which he has received from both yourself and the firm. The Panel will then review the documents and may decide that they require an inspection of the work to be carried out to provide more information to assist them towards making their decision.

If such an inspection is requested, a Technical Inspector will be appointed by the Customer Liaison Officer on behalf of the Panel. The Inspector will make arrangements to inspect the work and will speak to both you and the plumbing firm about the issues which are in dispute.

Once he has completed his inspection the Technical Inspector will then submit his report to the Complaints Panel who will reconsider the issues of the complaint taking into account the Technical Inspector's report and all the other correspondence. The Complaints Panel will then issue their decision.

The Complaints Panel have the power to either uphold or reject in full or partially any complaint which is made to them. If they decide that remedial work has to be undertaken then the plumbing firm has to be given the opportunity to carry out these remedial works. If the firm refuses to carry out the works or there is an unnecessary delay in carrying out the works then this matter may be referred to the Scheme's warranty arrangements for resolution. Full details about the Warranty Scheme are available on request from the Customer Liaison Officer.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the complaints procedure can be obtained from the Customer Liaison Officer, Richard Graves Telephone 0845 838 1583 (Calls cost 5p per minute plus your phone company's network access charge. Call charges from mobiles may vary.) or e-mail query@pilb.org