

Complaints Policy

Designated Complaints Officer (DSL): Lucinda Shaw, Managing Partner, lucinda@taramediation.co.uk

This Complaints Policy sets out how TARA Mediation (“the Company”) handles complaints from clients and other parties who use the Company’s mediation services. The Company is committed to providing a fair, transparent, and accessible complaints process.

1.0 This policy applies to:

- Complaints about the quality or conduct of her mediation services
- Complaints about the behaviour or conduct of the mediator
- Complaints about administrative procedures or handling of your case

2.0 Scope and exclusions

What can be addressed

- Complaints about the below will be investigated:
- The conduct or competence of the mediator
- The quality of the mediation process
- Administrative errors or delays
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Breaches of this complaints policy
- Any other aspect of the mediation service provided

What is not covered

- Complaints about the outcome of mediation (we do not remediate or adjudicate on the merits of disputes)
- Complaints relating to a court's decision or legal proceedings
- Anonymous complaints (we require contact details to investigate)
- Complaints made more than 12 months after the event giving rise to the complaint
- Matters that are the subject of legal proceedings or have been settled

3.0 How to make a complaint

Complaints should be made in writing and addressed to:

TARA Mediation
To the attention of Lucinda Shaw
17 Crosby Row
London, England SE1 3YD
lucinda@taramediation.co.uk

Complaints can be submitted by:

- Email
- Post
- In person (by appointment)

If the complaint is about Lucinda Shaw, please email leanne@taramediation.co.uk or lisa@taramediation.co.uk.

4.0 Information required

When making a complaint, please provide:

- Your name and contact details
- The date(s) of the mediation session(s) in question
- The names of the other party/parties involved
- Details of the complaint, including what happened and why you are dissatisfied
- What outcome you are seeking
- Copies of any relevant correspondence

5.0 Time limits

Complaints should be made within 28 days of the incident giving rise to the complaint, or as soon as reasonably practicable. Complaints made more than 12 months after the event will not normally be investigated unless there are extenuating circumstances.

6.0 Acknowledgement and initial response

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Complainant will receive written acknowledgement within 5 working days, confirming:

- That your complaint has been received
- The date it was received
- A reference number for the complaint
- The name of the person handling the complaint
- An outline of the next steps

Initial assessment

Within 10 working days of receipt, an initial assessment will be carried out to determine:

- Whether the complaint falls within the Investigator's remit
- Whether any immediate action is required
- What further investigation may be needed

If the complaint is outside the Investigator's remit, this will be explained in writing and advise the Claimant of any alternative options available.

7.0 Investigation process

If a full investigation is required, the Investigator will:

- Gather all relevant documentation and evidence
- Interview relevant parties (where appropriate and with consent)
- Consider the complaint against our professional standards and the mediation code of conduct
- Prepare a thorough record of our findings

Confidentiality during investigation

All information gathered during the complaints process will be treated as confidential and held securely. Information will only be shared where necessary to investigate the complaint or where required by law.

Investigation timeline

The investigation will normally be completed within 30 days of receipt of the complaint. If the investigation is likely to take longer, the Investigator will inform the Complainant in writing and explain the reasons for any delay.

8.0 Resolution and outcome

Possible outcomes

Following investigation, we may:

- Dismiss the complaint (if unfounded)

- Uphold the complaint (in full or in part)
- Offer a resolution, which may include:
- An apology
- An explanation of what happened
- Confirmation of corrective action taken
- Financial compensation (where appropriate)
- Remediation or waiver of fees (if appropriate)

Final response letter

The Complainant will receive a detailed written response within 40 working days of receipt of the complaint (or as soon as reasonably practicable if the investigation takes longer). This letter will include:

- A summary of the complaint
- The findings
- The reasons for the decision
- Details of any action taken or to be taken
- Information about next steps and the Complainant's right to appeal

9.0 Appeals

Right to appeal

If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the procedure, the Complainant may appeal in writing within 14 days of receiving the final response letter.

Appeals should be submitted to:

The Society of Mediators
218 Strand
DX 232 London
Chancery Lane
London WC2R 1AT
support@societyofmediators.com
[+44 7438 920330](tel:+447438920330)

The Complainant's appeal should:

- Set out clearly why the Complainant disagrees with the decision
- Provide any new evidence or information relevant to the complaint
- Be made within 14 days of the final response letter

10.0 Appeal investigation

A review of the original investigation and the appeal will be carried out within 20 working days. This will normally be reviewed by a different person from the original investigator where possible.

Final appeal decision

The Complainant will receive written notification of the outcome of the appeal within 50 working days of receipt of the appeal. This decision will be final.

11.0 External complaints procedures

Alternative Dispute Resolution

If the Complainant remains dissatisfied, the Complainant may wish to consider:

- Referring the matter to an external ombudsman (if applicable to mediation services)
- Pursuing the matter through the civil courts

- Contacting relevant professional bodies or regulators

Professional regulation

Whilst an independent practice, we are regulated by the Society of Mediators, whose complaints policy can be found at <https://societyofmediators.com/complaints-policy>.

12.0 Complaints records

We will maintain a record of:

- All complaints received
- Our investigation and findings
- The outcome and any actions taken
- Appeal outcomes

These records will be kept for a minimum of seven (7) years and will be treated as confidential.

13.0 Learning and improvement

Complaints will be reviewed regularly to identify any patterns or areas for improvement in service delivery and practice.

14.0 Costs

Free to complain

Making a complaint is free. You will not be charged for making a complaint or the investigation.

Legal costs

The Investigator will not be responsible for any legal costs the Complainant may incur in pursuing a complaint.

Mediation of the complaint

If appropriate, the Investigator may offer to mediate the complaint itself. This can sometimes help resolve matters more quickly and satisfactorily. However, you are under no obligation to accept this offer.

15.0 Timescale summary

- Receipt of complaint: Day 0
- Acknowledgement: Within 5 working days
- Initial assessment completed: Within 10 working days
- Investigation completed: Within 30 working days
- Final response issued: Within 40 working days
- Appeal deadline: Within 14 days of final response
- Appeal decision: Within 50 working days of appeal receipt

16.0 Data protection

All information provided in relation to a complaint will be processed in accordance with UK data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018. The Complainant has the right to request access to information the Investigator and Lisa Marsden Helfer holds about you.

Contact

For complaints or further information about this policy, please contact:

TARA Mediation

hello@taramediation.co.uk

Policy date: 6 April 2026



Review date: 5 April 2027