



# INTERNAL COMPLAINTS POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

Defence Systems Ltd t/a Park Watch takes complaints seriously as they help us to improve areas of our business operations.

Our complaints policy is an opportunity for customers to tell us when we might have fallen short of expectation, and how we can put things right.

Defence Systems Ltd t/a Park Watch receive, evaluate, make and record its decisions on complaints in a non-discriminatory manner, in accordance with the requirements of the accredited parking association.

## POLICY SCOPE

The policy is designed to deal with concerns raised in relation to parking enforcement only; complaints that do not relate to matters pertaining to the IPC's Approved Operator Code of Practice or Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019 are not covered under the scope of the policy.

## 1. OPTIONS TO LODGE A COMPLAINT

1.1 Motorists can submit a complaint via letter or by sending an email to [complaints@parkwatch.co.uk](mailto:complaints@parkwatch.co.uk). A complaint received via letter will be scanned and emailed to the complaint's inbox. A complaint can relate to a specific PCN or may be wider. A complaint is a grievance which raises concerns with the processes, policies, services, or staff at Defence Systems Ltd t/a Park Watch, whereas limited concerns raised with the legitimacy of a PCN is more likely to be an appeal.

## 2. RECORDING A COMPLAINT

2.1 All complaints and their outcomes will be recorded on the complaints log for 36 months, with all fields completed. This includes:

- a) the date of complaint;
- b) a copy of the complaint;
- c) a copy of all correspondence;
- d) the outcome; and
- e) the details of any corrective action required and undertaken to ensure the situation does not recur (where the complaint has merit), including such advice as may have been given to the complainant; with personal data redacted as appropriate in accordance with GDPR.

### 3. WHO CAN COMPLAIN?

3.1 Complaints can be submitted by motorists, either a Driver or Registered Keeper. If a complaint is submitted on behalf of a motorist, by a third party, we may require additional authorisation to process the complaint as per General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

3.2 We may also receive complaints raised by the general public which will be responded to

### 4. INVESTIGATING A COMPLAINT

4.1 All complaints are investigated thoroughly by a dedicated member of staff. The investigation process can vary depending on the complaint raised but will typically include a thorough investigation of the underlying PCN and any specific concerns raised by the motorist. This will include liaising with other departments where relevant.

4.2 Training is provided to all complaint handlers prior to and throughout their time within the department. The training is regularly reviewed and updated to meet the requirements of our governing body and any changes in legislation.

4.3 Where a complaint also includes information that is deemed to be an appeal, the appeals process will be enacted, and we will inform the complainant of this. If after further investigation we find that the complaint is not relevant to an appeal or the complainant informs us that they do not wish their correspondence to be handled as an appeal, then the process shall revert to the complaints process.

### 5. RESPONDING TO A COMPLAINT

5.1 All complaints must be acknowledged within 14 days and must be responded to within 28 days. However, we aim to acknowledge within 5 working days and respond within 10 working days. Where we are unable to respond to a complaint within 28 days, we will write to the complainant to explain why the matter is not concluded and the new timeframe in which they should receive a response.

5.2 Once the investigator has determined the outcome of a complaint, we will write to the complainant explaining the outcome and the reasoning behind our decision. All points raised will be responded to in a clear, informative, and professional manner. A complaint is normally responded to in the same method as it was raised (i.e. post or email)

5.3 The name and contact details of the complainant should be removed from the record once the complaint is resolved.

5.4 If a motorist is not happy with the way a complaint has been handled, we will refer them to the IPC. When responding to a complaint from an MP we will include the statement required by the IPC.

### 6. BEST PRACTICE

6.1 We will routinely review complaints for evidence of patterns or repeated concerns which might require a review of procedures, refreshing, rephrasing and clarification of guidance or retraining of staff.