



PRAISE, COMMENTS and COMPLAINTS POLICY and PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

Blacker Sheep takes all complaints, comments and praise seriously and expects all staff to respond promptly, courteously and appropriately. *All* complaints, comments and praise should be notified to the Managing Director, who will action them all personally unless agreed otherwise.

Blacker Sheep does not ascribe blame to any individual staff member for complaints related to processing; the analysis and resolution of complaints, as well as comments and praise, will be used as a means to improve business practice and quality.

Comments, praise and complaints may be received by post, email, phone or in person and the person who receives the praise/comment/complaint should deal with it as described in the following procedure.

Complaints relating to any breach of privacy or data security will be dealt with by the Privacy and Security Policy.

All complaints, comments and praise must be treated in accordance with the Terms of Trade applicable to the transaction for The Natural Fibre Company (small commission or trade terms) or Blacker Yarns.

2. Praise

- the person giving the praise should be thanked within two working days (or at once if in person or by phone) using the same means of communication as it was received and pass the information on to the Managing Director
- the praise should be passed on and shared with any relevant staff
- paper versions may be placed on the noticeboards
- non paper versions may be shared by internal email and a printed version should be filed on the customer file
- after one month the paper should be filed in the **Comments Folder**

3. Comments

- the person making the comment should be thanked within two working days (or at once if in person or by phone) using the same means of communication as it was received and pass the information on to the Managing Director
- the staff member receiving the comment, by whatever means, should consider whether it is a helpful suggestion, a “near miss” complaint or simply a passing comment and inform the Managing Director accordingly
- if any action is agreed as a result of the comment, the person making the comment will be informed by the Managing Director
- a note of the comment and action taken should be filed in the **Comments Folder** and on the customer/supplier file

4. Complaints

4.1 General

- the staff member receiving the complaint should apologise and ensure that he/she fully understands the nature of the complaint, its importance to the complainant and any timescales needed by them



- he/she should immediately acknowledge receipt to the person making the complaint by the same means of communication as it was received, should inform the complainant that their complaint has been passed to the Managing Director and will be dealt with as soon as practical and that they will receive at least fortnightly updates until it is fully resolved
- a note of all complaints received verbally should be taken and passed to the Managing Director and a copy put on the complainant's file
- the staff member receiving a written complaint should at once pass the information to the Managing Director
- The Managing Director will consult colleagues and line managers to decide on how best to resolve the complaint and, once a course of action is agreed, this will immediately be communicated to the complainant, together with a firm timescale for resolution
- action to resolve a complaint should be undertaken as a priority, ahead of other work
- regular updates and timescales should be notified to the complainant and once the resolution is achieved, the complainant should be consulted as to their level of satisfaction with the resolution
- if a complaint is received about staff behaviour, this will be investigated and dealt with under the Disciplinary or Capability procedures, as appropriate
- a note of each complaint, however received, should be filed in the **Comments Folder**

4.2 *Natural Fibre Company complaints*

- if resolving a complaint requires additional work on the goods, this should be scheduled as quickly as possible, depending on the type of work required, and the nature of the work to be done explained to the complainant
- if faulty goods are to be returned for re-working, Blacker Sheep will reimburse the postage, undertake the re-work for free and, if necessary, offer to replace the material for free (in return for receiving the faulty goods back)
- if faulty goods cannot be re-worked, then the customer may be offered a partial or total refund or a discount off their next order as compensation, depending on the nature of the problem
- if faulty goods returned are considered not to be faulty by Blacker Sheep, this should be explained carefully and in sufficient detail to be understood by the customer and an apology should be made for insufficient communication
- if a complaint is about other than faulty goods or processing, or because of the fault of an external contractor or carrier, an apology should be made at once and any remedial action undertaken and notified to the complainant

4.3 *Blacker Yarns Complaints*

- for faulty yarns from Blacker Yarns, the Blacker Yarns Returns Policy should be used
- if goods cannot be replaced, goods to an equivalent quality and value should be offered in exchange
- if appropriate, for example if the complainant does not want equivalent goods, a gift voucher for Blacker Yarns may also be offered as compensation
- customers should be carefully informed of any issues about different dye batches and variations in tension between yarns composed of different fibres or spun differently, to deal with issues of insufficient yarn for example
- for pattern errors, the error should be reviewed, if necessary consulting the pattern designer, and corrected and the corrections sent to the complainant
- any pattern revisions should be undertaken and the updated pattern uploaded to the website, with the publication date updated and Ravelry, with errata notified
- if there is a delay on the pattern correction for technical reasons or staff absence, this should be explained to the complainant and an expected timescale given to them