

MERCURE

HOTELS

Tuesday 14th January 2025

Complaints Policy – Mercure NEWCASTLE, George Washington Hotel

This policy statement sets out the hotels approach to dealing with complaints during your visit to the Mercure NEWCASTLE, George Washington Hotel.

1. We pride ourselves on offering a high level of service across all areas of the estate and will, therefore, do everything we can to establish and maintain our standards. This includes seeking to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly, and to the satisfaction of all concerned.
2. We welcome feedback on your stay. The purpose of this policy is to have the opportunity to privately respond to your feedback, and as such does not apply after feedback is published publicly through media, travel agents or websites such as Google, TripAdvisor and TrustYou. We will carefully consider all feedback, whether positive or negative, and will review our policies and practices accordingly whether the feedback is private or public.
3. We will treat all concerns and complaints seriously and courteously. In return, we expect guests to behave respectfully towards all members of the team. In particular, any disagreement with the hotel should not be expressed inappropriately or in front of other guests.
4. All team members and members of the Senior Leadership Team, will receive a copy of this policy statement and will be familiar with the hotels procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints, to which they will have access as required. The policy is available on request to guests and publicly on our website.
5. This procedure will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.
6. Staff will receive training in handling concerns and complaints as appropriate. This may be on an individual basis, or as a group activity for all staff, or for specific departments.
7. Whilst we will seek to resolve concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties, it may not be possible to achieve this in every case. We will, therefore, use our option to close a complaint before all the stages of the hotel's procedures have been exhausted, if this appears to be appropriate.

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Procedures for Dealing with Complaints

Most concerns from guests are handled under the following general procedures. To ensure you receive an effective response to your complaint, it will be helpful if you:

- Co-operate with the hotel in seeking a solution to the complaint
- Express the complaint during your visit as early as possible; complaints must be raised within two days of an incident occurring.
- respond promptly to request for information or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance if needed; and
- treat all those involved in the complaint, with respect.

The procedure is divided into three stages.

1. The informal stage aims to resolve the concern through speaking with the Manager on Duty when the incident/concern arose.
2. Stage one is the first formal stage at which written complaints are considered by the Front of House Manager who has special responsibility for dealing with complaints.
3. Stage two is the next stage once stage one has been worked through. It involves a complaints appeal to the Deputy General Manager.

How each of these stages operates is explained below:

Informal stage – your initial contact with the Duty Manager

- Many concerns will be dealt with informally when you make them known to us. The first point of contact should be with the Duty Manager.
- Once your concern is made known to us, we will see you, or contact you by telephone in your room, as soon as possible. If it is necessary, all members of staff know how to refer to the appropriate person with responsibility for your particular issues. He or she will make a clear note of the details and will check later to make sure that the matter has been followed up.
- If you are still dissatisfied following this informal approach, your concern will become a formal complaint and we will deal with it at the next stage.

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Stage One – formal consideration of your complaint

This stage in our procedures applies where you are not happy with the informal approach to dealing with your concern, as outlined above.

- Normally, your written complaint should be addressed to the Front of House Manager. If, however, your complaint concerns the Front of House Manager personally, it should be sent to the hotel marked “for the attention of the Deputy General Manager”.
- We will acknowledge your complaint in writing as soon as possible after receiving it. This will be posted within three working days.
- The complaint will either be investigated by the Front of House Manager, or they may ask a senior member of staff to be the investigating officer.
- Normally we would expect to respond in full within 10 working days but if this is not possible, we will write to explain the reason for the delay and let you know when we hope to be able to provide a full response.
- As part of our consideration of your complaint, we may invite you to a meeting (phone call or in person) to discuss the complaint and fill in any details required. If you wish, you can ask someone to accompany you to help you explain the reasons for your complaint.
- Following the meeting, the Front of House Manager or investigating officer, where necessary will talk to witnesses and take statements from others involved.
- If the complaint is against a member of staff, it will be dealt with under the hotel's confidential investigation and disciplinary procedures, as required by law.
- The Front of House Manager or investigating officer will keep dated records of all meetings and telephone conversations, and other related documentation.
- With regards to meetings with yourself or other witnesses, non-verbatim notes will be agreed and signed by both/all parties.
- Once we have established all the relevant facts, we will send you a written response to your complaint. This will give an explanation of the Front of House Manager or investigating officer decision and the reasons for it the outcome.
- If you are unhappy with the way in which we reached our conclusions, you may wish to proceed to stage two, as described following. If you wish to move your complaint to stage two, you must contact us within 3 working days of receiving your response.

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Stage Two – consideration by the Deputy General Manager

- If the complaint has already been through stage one and you are not happy with the outcome as a result of the way in which the complaint has been handled, you can take it further to the Deputy General Manager. This is a formal process, and the ultimate recourse at the hotel. The purpose of this arrangement is to give you the chance to present your views in front of the Deputy General Manager who will have little or no prior knowledge of the details of the case and who can, therefore, consider it without prejudice.
- However, the aim of the appeal to the Deputy General Manager is not to rehear the complaint. It is there to review how the complaint has been investigated and to determine whether this has been conducted fairly and reasonable outcomes reached. It is there to establish facts and make recommendations which will reassure you that we have taken the complaint seriously.
- The Deputy General Manager appeal operates according to the following formal procedures:
 - The Deputy General Manager will aim to review the complaint within 3 working days of receiving your request.
 - You will be asked whether you wish to provide any further written documentation in support of your appeal.
 - As a rule, no evidence, or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced at this stage by any of the participants. If either party wishes to do so, the appeal will be adjourned so that the other party has a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence.
 - You will receive the written outcome of the Deputy General Managers appeal together with their decision.

Closure of complaints

Very occasionally, the hotel feels that it needs, regrettably, to close a complaint where the complainant is still dissatisfied. We will do all we can to help to resolve a complaint against the hotel but sometimes it is simply not possible to meet all the complainant's wishes. Sometimes it is simply a case of "agreeing to disagree".

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UK GDPR and DPA Complaints

If your complaint is in relation to UK GDPR and DPA, this should be directed to the Group Financial Controller, who is responsible for dealing with all complaints in line with the complaints process outlined above. This will be the basis for dealing with Data Protection Complaints and appeals. A written outcome will be provided. If the hotel does not comply with a Subject Access Request within 1 month (subject to any extension), or refuses all or part of the request, written reasons will be provided, setting out the principles for the refusal.

If you feel that the hotel has not dealt with your matter satisfactorily you can complaint to the Information Commissioner

By post:

*Customer Contact
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF*

Or by email: casework@ico.org.uk

More information is on the ICO website www.ico.org.uk

This policy is reviewed by the senior leadership team on an annual basis.