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What's the most common complaint?



One of the most common complaints ARB receives about architects is a failure to deal with complaints properly. Most professionals will have to deal with complaints about their work at some point in their careers, and recognising and dealing with a client's grievance at an early stage can be an easy way of preventing a complaint escalating into a full-blown dispute. The reputation of a practice is one of its most valuable assets, and research has shown that the power of a customer's 'word-of-mouth' when they feel they have been treated unfairly can be hugely damaging to any firm.

Based on our experience, here are our top-tips for dealing with complaints:

Have a written complaints procedure, and make it available to clients. This not only demonstrates that you take your customer's feedback seriously, but it will manage the complainant's expectations as to what response they might be able to expect, and when.

Try not to take criticism personally. Most professionals will at some point have someone dissatisfied with the service they provide. It is never nice, but try to use it as a learning experience.

Think about your response before you send it. It is very tempting to reply immediately to criticism, and often regrettable things are said in the heat of the moment, particularly on email.

Don't ignore it. Dissatisfied clients will rarely go away if you fail to reply, and the problem will only escalate.

Ask a third-party. Whether it will be a fellow architect or another employee, it is always a good idea to ask the advice of someone else who is a little more distanced from the situation.

Notify your professional indemnity insurer and keep them informed. Not only should you do this so as not to invalidate your cover, but your insurer may be able to give you professional assistance in responding to the complaint.

Annual retention fee reminder



Thank you to everyone who has already paid their 2015 Registration Fee. If you haven't already done so, the quickest and easiest way to pay your fee is online. You will automatically receive a certificate of registration once payment has been received.

All you need is your registration number, this is the 7 digit code ending with a letter found on your statutory notice. **Payments can be made online up until midnight on Wednesday 31 December. If you don't make payment by 31 December, or resign, your name will be removed for non-payment. Re-joining the Register will involve making an application and**

paying an additional payment of £55, on top of the Retention Fee of £107.

We will be extending our opening hours during December. Full details can be found online at <http://arb.org.uk/retentionfee-opening-hours>

If you no longer wish to be on the Register, you can resign, before 31 December 2014, using your unique code (as explained above) either online by visiting www.registrants.arb.org.uk; or by emailing us at info@arb.org.uk; or by writing to us at the address below.

Periodic Review update



The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has completed the first phase of the 2014 periodic review.

The department received a strong response to its call for evidence as to whether or not the regulation of architects should continue and has concluded, that there remains a case for continued light-touch regulation based on protection of title.

At the Board meeting, Elizabeth Whatmore, Chair of the Review Panel presented an update to the Board, presented an update to the Board. They summarised the conclusions of phase 1 of the review and outlined the next steps for phase 2. They explained how stakeholders would be involved in further discussions on key regulatory areas, to identify opportunities to simplify the role of the regulator.

Over the coming months, it is planned that DCLG will hold a series of workshops, seeking wide ranging participation including representation from professional bodies, the consumer sector, academia/education sector and other regulatory bodies, as well as ARB. The workshops will discuss: the prescription of qualifications; the disciplinary process and governance arrangements.

The DCLG intends to complete phase 2 by the end of March 2015.

Grand Designs Live exhibition update



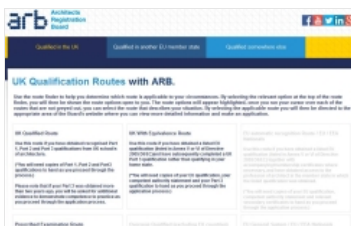
We had another successful year exhibiting at Grand Designs Live, in Birmingham.

Almost 60,000 people visited the show and our stand was busy throughout the event not only building awareness amongst consumers, but highlighting the importance of checking the ARB Register. We had the opportunity to meet architects, consumers and students during the four day event.

Our 'Meeting your Architect' leaflet, which has been developed to help consumers at their initial meeting with their architect, generated lots of interest. We have introduced this form to assist in lowering the number of complaints we receive. This leaflet can be found on our website and is available to be downloaded as an editable document at www.arb.org.uk/public

Following very positive feedback from industry professionals and the public, we will be exhibiting at this, and the National Homebuilding and Renovating Show, again in 2015.

Have you seen our new 'Route Finder'?



We've recently added a 'Route Finder' to our website, to help determine which qualification route is applicable. By selecting the relevant option at the top of the Route Finder, visitors are shown highlighted options. By selecting the most applicable route based on the users qualifications, the user is directed to the most appropriate area of the website, where more detailed information is available, including links to the online application systems. Visit <http://www.arb.org.uk/find-my-registration-route>

Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) Consent Orders update

After considering the positive response to its consultation, the Board has agreed to introduce PCC Consent Orders in 2015. This will allow for certain disciplinary cases to be resolved by consent between the architect and the ARB without the need for a full public hearing, where the allegations are fully admitted and it is in the public interest to do so. These changes will take effect from 1 January 2015. The aim of this procedure is to streamline the disciplinary process where it is appropriate to do so, for the benefit of the architect

and a reduced cost to the profession.

The full details of the Consultation can be found on our website www.arb.org.uk/consultations

Board Effectiveness Review Update

In 2012, the Board established an annual Effectiveness Review process. The results of which are considered by the Board and the Committees. 2014 will be the third year of the Board undertaking an Effectiveness Review. Undertaking regular reviews and building in time to self-reflect, helps the Board identify areas of improvement in its performance and governance. The Board recognises the importance of evaluation and strives to improve its effectiveness. You can find more information on the process at www.arb.org.uk/Agenda-20-11-14

Equality and Diversity

The Equality Act 2010 is perhaps one of the most important pieces of legislation in many years, as it brought together each of the separate strands of diversity law under one umbrella. In 2010, we introduced our Equality scheme. Our scheme was introduced in line with the Government's public sector equality duty, which places a responsibility on all public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between different groups of people. The duty also helps to ensure that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day-to-day work.

Equality has become embedded in all areas of our work, not least by the Board, which considers the implications for equality with every decision it takes.

At the last Board meeting, the Board considered progress made in this area. One action for 2014 is the collection of equality data from every person on the Register. Equality monitoring data allows us to analyse whether there may be barriers in any of our processes that could be discriminatory. It also helps to give us an understanding of whether our communications, on whatever topics, are reaching a wide and diverse range of people. If, from studying the data, it appears that there are elements which create barriers, we can undertake an assessment to identify where these are, and how they might be removed.

As part of our equality data monitoring, we will be emailing a very short questionnaire to everyone on the Register in the near future. Participation is voluntary but your support is invaluable.

Prescription of Qualifications



As part of its business at the November meeting, the Board considered applications from Higher Education Institutions seeking to renew prescription of their qualifications under the Architects Act 1997:

The Board decided that prescription of the following qualifications should continue until January 2016:

University of East London/Centre for Alternative Technology

Professional Diploma in Architecture: Advanced Environmental and Energy Studies, CAT - Part 2

The Board decided that prescription of the following qualification should continue until May 2019:

University of the Arts London/Central Saint Martins

BA (Hons) Architecture: Spaces and Objects - Part 1

For further details, please see the 'Qualifications' section of ARB's website, <http://www.arb.org.uk/schools-and-institutions-of-architecture>

Thoughts from the Chair

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Welcome to our November ebulletin, the last one for 2014.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) recently announced the outcome of phase 1 of the periodic review. Stephen Williams MP, the Minister responsible, concluded that there remains a case for continued light-touch regulation based on protection of title. This opinion supports an ongoing need for regulation. The DCLG review group will now move on to phase 2, which will involve working with stakeholders to identify how best to deliver the ongoing regulation of architects. Our focus as a Board will be to ensure the organisation continues to deliver its regulatory function effectively, whilst at the same time, contributing to further constructive debate during the second phase of the review around key regulatory issues such as maintaining standards for the benefit of architects and consumers. You can read the full details of the periodic review update in this e-bulletin.

At our Board meeting last week, we discussed a whole range of topics including the review of Routes to Registration. This review was due to commence in early 2015. The Board decided, with regret, to postpone this project in the short term, recognising that the periodic review will explore issues which are central to this matter. The Board also felt that the organisation's resources would be focused on contributing to DCLG's review over the coming months and that there was not the capacity to address this substantial project adequately in tandem with the government review.

There was a very positive response to the consultation on the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) Consent Orders, with the aim of streamlining the disciplinary process. An update is featured in the Latest News section this month or you can find full details of the consultation on our website www.arb.org.uk/consultations.

Further information on some of the issues we discussed this month can be found within Latest News on this ebulletin. To see all our papers for the Board meeting and to see the wide range of topics we discussed, including progress on the Board Effectiveness Review and our Equality and Diversity work, visit our website [here](#).

And finally, just a gentle reminder to anyone who hasn't yet paid their 2015 retention fee. The quickest and simplest way to pay is online. All you'll need is your registration number (the seven digit code ending with a letter shown on your statutory notice). Alternatively we have extended opening hours from Monday 15 December if you'd prefer to pay over the phone. Full details can be found at www.arb.org.uk/retentionfee-opening-hours. **Please ensure payments are made before 31 December 2014 to avoid removal from the Register.**

It just remains for me to wish you all happy holidays! I will be in touch again in February, after our first 2015 Board meeting, when I will update you on phase 2 of the periodic review and other Board business.

Best wishes for the coming year,

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Update your details

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Update your details

Can consumers find you?

These are the contact details that clients and potential clients see when they view your personalised Register web page. See below for details of how to update.



Address

ARB
Addressline1
Addressline2
Addressline3
Addressline4
Addressline5
Postcode



Registration Number

XXXXXXI



Contact Details

T: Phone Number
F: Fax Number
E: xxxx@arb.org.uk
W: <http://www.arb.org.uk>

Why is this important?

The ARB online register allows you to amend your contact details, email and web address, so consumers can find you more easily. It's important we hold your current details to ensure our mailings reach you and are kept up to date with ARB news. It's also beneficial to display your current email and phone numbers so consumers can get in touch with you.

If you would like to change or update these details please copy your unique code below:

XX XX XX 1234 5678

Login