

# Stroma Certification Ltd

## Complaints & Appeals Policy

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## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	Record Keeping	3
1.2	Amendments to Quality System	3
1.3	Statutory Rights	3
1.4	Non-Resolved Complaints & Appeals	3
<b>2</b>	<b>Complaints</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	How to report a Complaint	4
2.2	Information Required	4
2.3	Complainants	4
2.4	Categories of Complaints	5
2.5	Dealing with the Complaint	6
2.6	Complaints where Criminal Activity is involved	7
2.7	Member Complaint Requests	7
2.8	Notifications - EPBR Scheme Members only	8
<b>3</b>	<b>Fraudulent Conduct</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1	Documentation Fraud	8
<b>4</b>	<b>Appeals</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1	Categories of Appeals	9
4.2	Appeal's Received and Notification	10
<b>5</b>	<b>Escalation Process</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1	Escalation Matrix	11
5.2	Escalation Decision Notification	12
5.3	Outcomes	12

## 1 Introduction

Stroma Certification aims to provide high quality services to scheme members and their customers. All complaints and appeals that arise will be dealt with promptly, professionally and transparently. Stroma Certification will follow the complaints process for any disputes that also require resolution.

The approach adopted is to understand the root cause of the complaint and/or appeal, investigate and report on the validity of the claim and further develop our services using an ethos of continuous improvement.

Stroma Certification operates this integrated 'Complaints & Appeals Policy' for all certification schemes. A matrix is provided in Section 5 detailing the lines of escalation for each individual certification schemes to the relevant arbitration body. They act independently to Stroma Certification to seek resolutions to complaint and appeals that cannot be resolved between Stroma Certification and the other party.

Upon request, Stroma Certification will provide senior management, UKAS and any other authorised third party (such as DCLG or the GDORB) with a report of all logged complaints and appeals upon request. This information will be used to help in the production of bulletins to scheme members and the policies and procedures operated by Stroma Certification, as well as providing a transparent account of our complaints and appeals handling.

### 1.1 Record Keeping

All records of complaints and appeals will be maintained for a minimum of 7 years by Stroma Certification. The outcome of these complaints and appeals will be made available to the relevant authorised bodies.

All actions taken as a consequence of a complaint or appeal will be documented and the subsequent effectiveness of such actions will be monitored.

### 1.2 Amendments to Quality System

Stroma Certification reserves the right to amend all policy documentation pertaining to the quality system, in particular this 'Complaints & Appeals Policy'. All amendments will be issued to scheme members with the appropriate implementation date clearly stated, and will be freely available on the Stroma Certification website as appropriate.

### 1.3 Statutory Rights

All complaints, appeals or disputes received in respect of the assessment activity of certified scheme members will not affect the statutory rights of the Client or Homeowner at any stage of the process.

It is the responsibility of the certified member to ensure that this is explained to the Client or Homeowner when a complaint, appeal or dispute is received. Stroma Certification Ltd would typically expect to see a statement to this effect in a complaint response issued to a 'Client' or 'Homeowner'.

### 1.4 Non-Resolved Complaints & Appeals

All complaints or appeals received by Stroma Certification will be fully investigated and resolved internally. Those complaints or appeals that are not resolved to the mutual satisfaction of all parties involved will be escalated to the relevant arbitration body as detailed in Section 5.

## 2 Complaints

Stroma Certification will be responsible for all levels of the complaint handling process. The handling process will include at least the following elements and methods:

- a) An outline of the process for receiving, validating, investigating the complaint, and for deciding what actions are to be taken in response to it.
- b) Tracking and recording complaints, including actions undertaken in response to them.
- c) Ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken.

Stroma Certification on receiving the complaint will be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint. The submission, investigation and decision on any received complaints will not result in any discriminatory actions by Stroma Certification against the complainant. Stroma Certification will determine, together with the Organisation and the complainant, whether and, if so to what extent, the subject of the complaint and its resolution will be made public.

## 2.1 How to report a Complaint

Complaints can be reported by telephone, email, in writing or via the Stroma Certification website:

- 1) Telephone: 0845 621 11 11
- 2) Email: [certification@stroma.com](mailto:certification@stroma.com)
- 3) Online: <https://www.stroma.com/certification/complaints>
- 4) In writing to:  
Customer Services Team  
Stroma Certification Ltd  
4 Pioneer Way  
Castleford  
WF10 5QU

## 2.2 Information Required

Complaints should include the following information:

- 1) Complainant name.
- 2) Address of complainant.
- 3) Contact details (telephone and email).
- 4) Availability for feedback (preferred time to discuss feedback/ research the complaint further etc.).
- 5) Nature/details of the complaint.

For complaints concerning Stroma Certification scheme members, the following additional information will be required where known:

- 1) The Stroma Certification membership number.
- 2) Name of the member who carried out the works.
- 3) The assessment/ installation number details.
- 4) The date of assessment/ installation undertaken.

For complaints against Stroma Certification, the following additional information if relevant and if know should be provided:

- 1) EPC RRN, or other relevant reference number for the audit
- 2) Name of the staff member

Stroma Certification will be responsible for all levels of the complaint handling process detailed in the following sub-sections.

## 2.3 Complainants

Stroma Certification will process any complaint received in accordance with the 3 categories as detailed in Section 2.4. Stroma Certification will not limit who can and cannot make a complaint and have provided a list below:

- 1) Householder/ Client.
- 2) Householders/ Clients agent (estate agent or solicitor).
- 3) Employer of the scheme member.
- 4) Stroma scheme member.
- 5) Compliance officer (trading standards or building control).
- 6) Member of public.
- 7) Candidate undertaking a Stroma Certification training course.
- 8) Training Awarding Body.
- 9) Certification Body.
- 10) Government Department (DCLG, BEIS, Environment Agency).
- 11) Building Control.
- 12) UKAS.
- 13) Local Authority.
- 14) Any other stakeholder.

The above list is not exhaustive, and Stroma Certification will deal with any other complainant in exactly the same manner. For any complaint received, there is no charge to the complainant and any resolution costs will be paid for by Stroma Certification.

Upon receipt of a complaint, Stroma Certification will confirm whether the complaint relates to certification activities that it is responsible for and deal with it accordingly.

If the complaint relates to an organisation certified by Stroma Certification, then examination of the complaint will consider the effectiveness of the certified organisations management system where applicable. Any valid complaint about a certified organisation will also be referred by Stroma Certification to the organisation in question at an appropriate time.

## **2.4 Categories of Complaints**

Stroma Certification operates this 'Complaints & Appeals Policy' to ensure any complaint received will be addressed correctly and follows a clear process. Complaints are classified into the following three categories:

- 1) Complaints against Scheme Members.
- 2) Complaints against Stroma Certification.
- 3) General Complaints.

Each category is further explained below.

### **2.4.1 Complaints against Scheme Members**

Stroma Certification will process all complaints received concerning the actions of scheme members and can be further categorised as:

- 1) Behaviour of the scheme member.
- 2) Behaviour of the scheme member's company/ organisation.
- 3) Timescales and/ or the output produced by the scheme member.
- 4) Non-compliance with relevant regulations.

Clients of scheme members have the opportunity to raise a complaint directly to Stroma Certification after (or before) the complaint has initially been raised to the scheme member or organisation that they represent, unless the nature of the complaint means that this method is inappropriate.

In accordance with the specific certification schemes 'Code of Conduct', scheme members are required to provide all of their customers with a copy of their own complaints process, along with the Stroma Certification 'Complaints & Appeals Policy'.

For the MCS scheme operated by Stroma Certification, scheme members will also be expected to adhere to the complaints process defined within the RECC or HIES 'Code of Conduct'.

### **2.4.2 Complaints against Stroma Certification**

Stroma Certification will process all complaints against Stroma Certification, which can be categorised as but not limited to:

- 1) Behaviour of a member of staff (employed or contracted).
- 2) Training course and associated services.
- 3) Assessment and Certification.
- 4) Timescales and/ or the output produced as a result of an assessment/ audit.

### **2.4.3 General Complaints**

Stroma Certification will process any other general complaints received, examples of this could be:

- 1) DCLG.
- 2) UKAS.
- 3) Gemserv.
- 4) REA.
- 5) DEFRA.

- 6) BEIS.
- 7) Environment Agency.
- 8) Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).
- 9) Output produced by another scheme member.

All general complaints will be addressed in line with the processes as detailed within this document.

## 2.5 Dealing with the Complaint

Stroma Certification aims to respond to a complaint or dispute within 3 working days of receipt. The initial response will consist of a preliminary assessment or a 7 day holding period to allow additional time to review the reason for the complaint or dispute. A formal resolution will be undertaken, and reported back to all relevant parties at a later date, dependent on the severity of the complaint.

If the complaint or dispute cannot be resolved within the initial response, Stroma Certification will provide the complainant with an estimate of the length of time required to resolve the complaint or dispute.

The protocol for resolving complaints is as follows:

- 1) All complaints will be logged by the Stroma Certification Customer Services Team. This will include notes taken during a verbal complaint notification or from a submitted written complaint (email, online form or post).
- 2) The Stroma Certification Customer Services Team will then allocate the complaint to the appropriate departmental manager to review, validate and investigate. The allocated person(s) will not be involved or have previously been involved in the certification activities relating to the complaint.
- 3) The complainant will receive an initial acknowledgement response within 3 working days of the complaint being received, with a further period of 15 working days confirmed before further feedback will be issued.
- 4) If the nature of the complaint is such that the departmental manager cannot resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant within the 15 working days period, a further update will be issued to the complainant.
- 5) If the complaint investigation cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, then it can be referred to the Technical Director or appropriate deputy for review. A written response will be issued within 21 working days, once a further review has been undertaken.
- 6) If the complaint still cannot be resolved, it will be referred to the appropriate arbitration body overseeing the complaints process as outlined in Section 5.

### 2.5.1 Complaints against Scheme Members

All complaints received in respect of the activity of a scheme member will be reviewed by the relevant departmental manager using the following process:

- 1) After receipt of the complaint, the scheme member shall be permitted an opportunity to contest the complaint. The scheme member will be expected to submit a response and any supporting documents, relating to the nature of the complaint, within 15 days of the request being sent by Stroma Certification.
- 2) A full review of the scheme member's response and supporting information will be undertaken by the departmental manager. This may include conducting a desktop or site visit in order to resolve the nature of the complaint.
- 3) If the complaint is upheld, the scheme member shall receive written confirmation of the nature and extent of the complaint. Where applicable, all lodged reports that are directly affected shall be withdrawn/ suspended and amended.
- 4) The member shall also receive written confirmation of the corrective action they will be required to undertake such as, CPD, re-training or heightened auditing.
- 5) For more severe complaints that require resolution including amendments to the scheme member's working procedures, they will be informed of the deviation from the acceptable quality standards and procedures, and they shall be issued with a mandatory improvement action list. Their scheme membership may be suspended until such time that they have completed the required improvements to their own quality management system, and provide demonstrable evidence of such improvements to Stroma Certification. Future assessment activity will be monitored to measure the effectiveness of the improvement activity. All cases of suspension may escalate to expulsion, in the event of either:
  - a. The corrective action not being suitably implemented.

- b. Numerous complaints received against a scheme member that are upheld.
  - c. The scheme member being found guilty of intentionally misrepresenting the scheme rules or Stroma Certification generally.
- 6) For extremely severe complaints that represent a significant deviation from the acceptable quality standards of operation, expulsion of the scheme member may be required in combination with corrective action to the offending assessment activity. All cases of expulsion will be reported to all other certification schemes.

## 2.6 Complaints where Criminal Activity is involved

If a complaint involves apparent criminal activity, the incident will immediately escalate to the Technical Director and, without hesitation, be reported to the appropriate authority, for example the Police or Trading Standards.

## 2.7 Member Complaint Requests

Stroma Certification may decide to contact the clients of scheme members to assist with the resolution process. Clients of scheme members will be asked to submit feedback on the following:

- 1) Pre-visit contact and information.
- 2) Onsite behaviour.
- 3) Technology/ Measure Information.
- 4) Post-visit information and certificate production.

All scheme members are expected to adhere to both the 'Complaints & Appeals Policy' and individual 'Code of Conduct' relevant to their certification. The table below details the audit requests per scheme that Stroma Certification will make to its scheme members in regards to complaints to ensure the appropriate scheme requirements are being adhered to.

Scheme	Complaint Audit Request
<b>BS EN ISO 17024:2012</b>	
Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH)	1% of scheme members will be contacted to provide records of any complaints received.
<b>ISO/ IEC 17066:2012</b>	
Competent Persons Scheme (CPS)	100% of complaints audited during surveillance.
Green Deal Advice Organisation (GDAO)	Sample 10 per cent (or at least one, if any) of the complaint or dispute records.
Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS)	100% of complaints audited during surveillance.
PAS 2030 Installer	100% of complaints audited during surveillance.
<b>ISO/ IEC 17021:2015</b>	
ISO 9001 Quality Management System	100% of complaints audited during surveillance.
ISO 14001 Environmental Management System	100% of complaints audited during surveillance.
<b>Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme</b>	
Lead Energy Assessor	Sample 10 per cent (or at least one, if any) of the complaint records.



Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)	
Air Conditioning Energy Assessment (ACEA)	1% of scheme members will be contacted to provide records of any complaints or disputes received.
Domestic Energy Assessor (DEA)	
Domestic On-Construction Energy Assessments (DOCEA)	
Non-Domestic Energy Assessor (NDEA)	
Operational Ratings - Display Energy Certificates (OR-DEC)	

These will be checked and recorded. Failure to do so may result in action being taken which may result in the scheme member being suspended and/ or revoked from their scheme.

**2.8 Notifications - EPBR Scheme Members only**

Stroma Certification requires all scheme members registering a complaint to forward a copy of this complaint to all certification bodies where multiple memberships are held. The appropriate certification body will then be responsible for dealing with the complaint. For example, if a complaint is about a particular output then the certification body through which the certificate was lodged will be responsible for dealing with it.

**3 Fraudulent Conduct**

Stroma Certification shall take very seriously any allegations of fraudulent conduct or activity and will act swiftly and decisively to limit the damage that may be done by such activities in order to protect the integrity and reputation of all certification schemes.

This process is designed to define procedures for investigating claims of fraudulent conduct and protect the reliability of both the certification process and the status of Stroma Certification as a certification body. It will complement and enhance the complaints procedure detailed above but will diverge as necessary to ensure a swift conclusion to the alleged fraudulent conduct.

**3.1 Documentation Fraud**

Fraudulent activity may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- 1) Fraudulent claims
- 2) Deliberate misrepresentation
- 3) Forgery

Where fraudulent activity is reported or suspected, the individual/ organisation named in the allegation must produce appropriate evidence within a period of 2 working days from the initial request being made. If no or insufficient evidence is submitted in response to the allegation made against the individual or organisation, Stroma Certification shall impose a suspension on any organisation already certified pending investigation of the allegation (including examination of further evidence) for a maximum of 1 week.

For individuals/ organisations that are in the process of applying for scheme membership, the application will be put on hold pending investigation of the allegation. Suspension of the application process will be initiated upon receipt of the allegation and will continue for a maximum of 7 days after the information or evidence sent in response to the allegation has been received. This will be referred to as ‘the 7 day investigation period’.

In circumstances where the legitimacy of a signature is in question, Stroma Certification shall request further evidence of the same signature on formal identification documents such as driving license and credit/debit cards. In addition to this Stroma Certification may also request to see every certification related document held by the applicant or certified company in question which contains the disputed signature.

As a certification body Stroma Certification will fulfil its duty of care to take all reasonable measures to ensure that fraudulent activity (including the forging of signatures on submitted documentation) is investigated as fully as possible and to the satisfaction of the Stroma Certification Scheme Managers and where necessary the Quality Manager. It must be noted however that Stroma Certification will use its sole discretion to determine the validity of a signature and will determine if the signature in question ‘on sight appears to be reasonably similar as might be expected from a legitimate signature’.



Where there is any doubt or question over the outcome over the investigation of the alleged fraudulent conduct/ forged signature, the case will be escalated to the Stroma Certification Quality Manager for adjudication and final decision making to determine an outcome within the stipulated 7 day investigation period.

Should it be deemed that any allegation is upheld and fraudulent activity is considered to have occurred, the individual/ organisation in question will be informed of Stroma Certification's decision on the matter and will either:

- 1) Be permanently suspended and a notification of this sent to all other certification bodies, or,
- 2) Will be informed of the immediate termination of the application process at whatever stage the application has reached and a note be added to the internal customer records system detailing the facts of the investigation and outcome.

If, during the course of the investigation, the Quality Manager has any doubt over the final judgement on whether fraudulent activity or conduct has occurred, s/he may convene a special meeting of the applicable arbitration body (as detailed in section 5) to review the evidence and undertake the final decision making process on his behalf. This process may also be undertaken if the Quality Manager feels there is a conflict of interest that arises in his role as final Decision Maker and this responsibility will be deferred to the impartial arbitration body.

Similarly, the individual/ organisation suspended on the grounds of fraudulent activity/ conduct may wish to follow this 'Complaints & Appeals Policy' in order to have this decision and the facts of the case reviewed by the independent arbitration body.

#### **4 Appeals**

Stroma Certification's appeals handling process will include at least the following elements and methods:

- 1) An outline of the process for receiving, validating and investigating the appeal, and for deciding what actions are to be taken in response to it, taking into account the results of previous similar appeals;
- 2) Tracking and recording appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve them;
- 3) Ensuring that any appropriate preventative and corrective actions are taken.

On receipt of the appeal, Stroma Certification will be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the appeal. The submission, investigation and decision on an appeal undertaken by Stroma Certification will not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant. A transparent process will be undertaken to ensure a compliant and correct decision is made.

##### **4.1 Categories of Appeals**

Appeals can be made against the following categories:

- 1) Results of a complaint.
- 2) A quality audit/ assessment outcome.
- 3) Rejection of an application for training, APEL or certification.
- 4) Suspension of certification/ revocation of an existing membership.
- 5) Disciplinary process and procedures.
- 6) Other appeals.

The appeal will be reviewed by the applicable Scheme Manager provided they were not responsible for:

- 1) The original decision being appealed.
- 2) The subject off the appeal being made.

If this is the case, the matter must be referred to the Quality Manager or Technical Manger (as applicable). They will then arbitrate between the appellant and Stroma Certification, and will provide a fair and unbiased adjudication on the appeal.

#### **4.1.1 CSH and EPBR auditing only**

Where an appeal is made against an audit/ assessment undertaken on a scheme members work, the initial appeal review must be undertaken by the original auditor. If the appellant is still not satisfied with the review off the audit, this will then be escalated to the relevant Scheme Manager as detailed above.

An overview of the appeals process is as follows:

- 1) The appeal should be made in writing and shall set out the grounds of the appeal, including all relevant documentation, including where necessary the relevant EPC RRN, CSH registration number, or other assessment/ audit/ report reference.
- 2) Where deemed necessary by Stroma Certification an appeal interview may be arranged prior to undertaking the full appeal review.
- 3) Subject to a request to either submit more information, or attend an appeals interview, Stroma Certification will respond with the outcome of the appeal within 30 days of receipt.

#### **4.2 Appeal's Received and Notification**

Ideally, an appeal should be made in writing and shall set out the grounds of the appeal including all relevant documentation. However, where a verbal conversation (either face to face or over the telephone) has been held concerning an appeal, this will be thoroughly documented. A record of all appeals and supporting information will be held on the internal complaints and appeals database, audit database or scheme member/application record (as applicable) and all appeal outcomes will be held centrally for further reference.

A confirmation email will be issued to confirm receipt and confirm the appeal will be discussed and notification issued which won't be more than 30 days from the date of receipt of the appeal.

##### **4.2.1 EPBR auditing only**

Scheme Members must read the applicable EA Monitoring Procedure in addition to this policy document to understand the full process in place.

A scheme member is entitled to issue an appeal against audit feedback. On receipt of the audit feedback, the scheme member has 10 working days to issue the appeal in line with this policy. Where an appeal is not issued in this time scale the relevant EA Monitoring Procedure will be applied to the failed audit.

##### **4.2.2 Rejection of an Application for Training, APEL or Certification**

Applications for membership to Stroma Certification scheme(s) will be subjected to the distinct criteria as detailed in individual scheme documents. If the criteria are not met for the individual scheme, the application will be rejected. The Scheme Manager may investigate borderline applicants at his/hers discretion, resulting in a potential secondary application after retraining.

All rejected applicants will have an opportunity to lodge an appeal within 30 days of the original rejection notification.

##### **4.2.3 Suspension of Certification/ Revocation of an Existing Membership**

At all times Scheme Members must be able to satisfy the criteria of the qualified for purpose requirements identified in the following document (scheme dependant):

- 1) EPBR: "SMH3 – EA Scheme Members Handbook"
- 2) CSH: "SMH6 – CSH Scheme Handbook"
- 3) GDAO, PAS 2030, MCS and CPS: 17065: "SHB2 – Scheme Handbook".

Scheme Members are also subject to continual monitoring as part of the scheme(s) Quality Assurance (QA) procedures. A sample of any relevant assessments will be audited in detail including all supporting documentation. Any inaccurate results will be investigated and dependent on the severity and/ or number of the inaccuracies, certification may be:

- 1) Reviewed,
- 2) Suspended or
- 3) Revoked.

For clarification and full details of this continual monitoring process please see the relevant scheme 'Monitoring Procedure'.

Scheme members may also be suspended for financial irregularities relating to the certification process, example include but not limited to:

- 1) Lodgement payment
- 2) Membership payment

All suspended scheme members have an opportunity to lodge an appeal against their suspension.

#### 4.2.3.1 Members with Multiple Strand Membership

Where a certified member has membership of more than one scheme strand and is suspended because of quality or other issues associated with one particular strand, schemes shall not automatically suspend a member for all strands. However, where a scheme is aware that a member has been suspended for one particular strand, and has multiple strand membership, the scheme shall assess the reason for the suspension and make a judgement as to whether the reason for the suspension means that the individual is no longer competent, or "fit and proper" to undertake work on the different strands.

An example where an certified member is suspended for one strand but where there is no reason why the member should be suspended across all strands would be where the reason for suspension is scheme strand specific, such as a repeated failure to follow a particular scheme strand convention picked up as part of the audit process, and where the error does not cut across the other strands.

An example where an individual certified member is suspended from one strand shall lead to them being suspended across other scheme strands would be where a member has been suspended as part of a failure to comply with a 'Code of Conduct' requirement which is common to other scheme strands, and where the failure to comply with the 'Code of Conduct' requirement for one strand can reasonably be expected to have occurred for the other scheme strands.

## 5 Escalation Process

Stroma Certification has written this escalation procedure to provide clarification concerning the process for dealing with any unresolved complaint/dispute or appeal.

Unresolved complaints/ appeals can be referred to the appropriate arbitration body as detailed bellow. These bodies are compiled of independent industry stakeholders who will be informed of any complaints and appeals registered with Stroma Certification. If necessary an appeal may be escalated to a specially convened meeting for their review and impartial decision. If the body does not believe sufficient information has been provided for an informed decision to be made, they can ask for the escalated complaint/ appeal to be deferred to a later date.

The body will decide on the best course of action to take and this will be put to the vote. A full written record will be maintained by a member of the appropriate body and this will be retained with the original complaint/ appeal record.

### 5.1 Escalation Matrix

The matrix provided below details the lines of escalation to the relevant arbitration body who act independently to Stroma Certification and provide resolutions to complaints, appeals and disputes that cannot be resolved between Stroma Certification and the 'Complainant'. The routes identified in the matrix below conform to the requirements as stipulated in the applicable 'Regulatory Documentation'.

Certification Scheme	Governing Body	Appeals Panel	Impartiality Committee	Regulatory Documentation
Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH)	○			ISO/ IEC 17024:2012
Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)		●		EBPD SORs

ESOS Lead Energy Assessor		•		Energy Savings Obligation Scheme
Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS)			•	ISO/ IEC 17065:2012
Competent Persons Scheme (CPS)			•	ISO/ IEC 17065:2012
Green Deal Advice Service (GDAS)			•	ISO/ IEC 17065:2012
PAS 2030 Installer			•	ISO/ IEC 17065:2012
ISO 9001			•	ISO/ IEC 17021:2015
ISO 14001			•	ISO/ IEC 17021:2015

Key:

- Denotes the primary escalation route for individual scheme requirements.
- Denotes further escalation should the primary route not provide resolution.

### 5.1.1 Stroma Certification Governing Body

In accordance with the requirements of UKAS Certification (ISO/ IEC 17024:2012) and the Stroma Quality Management System, Stroma Certification's activities are overseen by an independent Committee, otherwise known as and to be referred to as The Governing Body. The Governing Body is to act as an independent and impartial 3rd party resolution panel for any grievance against Stroma Certification, its certified assessors, or customers that cannot be resolved by the internal methods detailed in this 'Complaints & Appeals Policy' as per the escalation process.

### 5.1.2 Stroma Certification Appeals Panel

The Stroma Certification Appeals Panel consists of 3 members from outside of Stroma Certification. All 3 members will attend the appeals meetings where a representative of Stroma Certification will be present however they do not hold any voting rights. The Appeals Panel will be ultimately responsible for dealing with the resolution of any complaint/ dispute or appeal that has previously been addressed through this 'Complaints & Appeals Policy' as per the escalation process.

All appeals must be submitted in writing and following the process as detailed in this document.

The Appeals Panel will arbitrate between the complainant and Stroma Certification, and will provide a fair and unbiased adjudication on the appeal.

### 5.1.3 Stroma Certification Impartiality Committee

In accordance with the requirements of UKAS Certification (ISO/ IEC 17065:2012 and ISO/ IEC 17021:2015), the Stroma Certification Impartiality Committee consists of members from outside of Stroma Certification. All members will attend the meetings where a representative of Stroma Certification will be present, however they do not hold any voting rights. The Impartiality Committee will be ultimately responsible for dealing with the resolution of any complaint/ dispute or appeal that has previously been addressed through this 'Complaints & Appeals Policy' as per the escalation process.

The Impartiality Committee will arbitrate between the complainant and Stroma Certification, and will provide a fair and unbiased adjudication on the matter.

## 5.2 Escalation Decision Notification

A response will be issued no more than 7 working days after the appropriate bodies meeting has been concluded, this will usually be in the form of an email unless previously agreed otherwise.

## 5.3 Outcomes

Likely actions to be recommended by either Stroma Certification or the relevant arbitration body will be:

- 1) Complaint or dispute not upheld then no further action is to be taken.
- 2) Minor complaint or dispute upheld, improvement action may be implemented.

- 3) Request further information/ investigation.
- 4) Amendments to Stroma Certification policies and procedures.
- 5) Re-train on specific area of the scheme &/ or software or type of property.
- 6) Amendments to the scheme members QMS.
- 7) Suspension of the scheme member subject to re-training, corrective action being undertaken, updating of their QMS, achievement of qualification or outcome of on-going investigation.
- 8) Suspension or Revocation of the member's certification. If this action is taken, Stroma Certification will notify all other certification schemes. This will be removed when any corrective actions required have been implemented.