



By Email

28 August 2023

To: Senior Executive Officers and Compliance Officers of Authorised Firms

RE: Complaints Handling Thematic Review 2023

Dear all,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the DFSA's upcoming Complaints Handling Thematic Review.

When clients have a Complaint¹, they should be able to make their complaint in an easy and straightforward manner and have confidence it will be dealt with fairly, consistently and promptly.

We expect Authorised Firms to have systems and controls in place, as well as properly trained staff, to identify and handle complaints appropriately. We also expect Authorised Firms to use complaints as valuable management information to identify trends and issues through root cause analysis and continuously improve their products and services for the benefit of their clients.

The Complaints Handling Thematic Review aims to:

- Assess Authorised Firms' approaches to complaints handling and dispute resolution, including compliance with the Rules in GEN Chapter 9;
- Identify good practice and areas for improvement for wider communication to Authorised Firms with a view to promoting effective complaints handling; and
- Identify any outliers and instances of material non-compliance for further action.

The review will be conducted in two phases. In the first phase we will request all Authorised Firms to respond to a survey providing an overview of their complaints handling arrangements, policies and procedures, and systems and controls. In the second phase we will contact a sample of Authorised Firms to request additional information and carry out a detailed review of their complaints handling arrangements, policies and procedures, and systems and controls by way of an on-site visit. Please treat this letter as notice that your firm may be included in this sample.

¹ 'Complaint' is defined in the DFSA Glossary Module as "*Any oral or written expression of dissatisfaction from a Client to an Authorised Firm in connection with the provision of, or failure to provide, a Financial Service to the Client*".



Following the review, we will publish our key findings. In line with our statutory objectives, the desired outcome of this review is greater protection for clients from poor complaints handling and dispute resolution by Authorised Firms. We also hope that by sharing examples of good practice, this will lead to improved client outcomes and experiences through effective complaints handling in the future and drive wider improvements across Authorised Firms.

As noted above, we will ask all Authorised Firms to complete a survey via the [DFSA ePortal](#) which you will receive shortly via a separate link. Please note that any Authorised Firms that do not complete the survey by the deadline may be included in the second phase of the review involving an on-site visit by the DFSA.

If you have any questions in relation to this letter, please contact us using the DFSA Supervised Firm Contact Form found on the [DFSA ePortal](#).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Baldacchino', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Justin Baldacchino
Managing Director, Supervision