



Complaints Policy

Family:	Quality
Manager Responsible:	Craig Tupling
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Complaints Policy

Scope and Purpose

At The Skills Network, we are committed to providing high quality services for all of our service users, taking account of users' views and using the findings to promote and develop capacity for sustainable improvement.

This document details the complaints procedure. A complainant may be a learner, prospective learner, employer or any other interested party that indicates dissatisfaction with the current level of service.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this procedure lies with the Executive Director - Quality & Delivery.

Administration, delivery and analysis of this procedure lies with the Quality Manager and team.

Investigating Leads are departmental managers who are appointed by the Quality Team to investigate, respond to and resolve complaints within the timeframe given below.

All staff have a responsibility to try to resolve informal complaints prior to invoking the formal Complaints Procedure.

All staff have a responsibility to forward formal complaints to complaints@theskillsnetwork.com

Making a Complaint

Formal complaints can be made in the following ways:

By telephone – 01757 210522.

By email – complaints@theskillsnetwork.com.

In writing – The Skills Network, Abbey Court, 6-16 Benedict Drive, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 8RY.

Policy

The Skills Network:

1. Will investigate complaints thoroughly and objectively and they will be regularly monitored by the Executive Director - Quality & Delivery.
2. Will appoint an investigation lead (a manager from the department the complaint is most associated with) to investigate and resolve the complaint and who will be the point of contact for the complainant.
3. Aims to reach an outcome/decision within 10 working days – however, some complaints, especially if the issue is more difficult to resolve, may take longer.
4. The Investigation Lead will contact the complainant to advise if the investigation is likely to take more than 10 working days, and will keep them informed of our progress by their preferred method of contact.
5. Will ensure that complainants will not be treated less favourably following their complaint. If this is found to be the case, staff disciplinary procedures will be followed.
6. Will identify actions and trends from complaints received to improve and develop our services.

Procedure

If a learner has a concern, it should initially be raised with their Assessor, Tutor, or their Learner Support Advisor, or other member of staff. The member of staff must take every opportunity to resolve the complaint informally. If an informal resolution is not possible, the complaint should then be escalated in one of the ways detailed above.

If the complaint is communicated by telephone or email, the member of staff can record the details on behalf of the complainant and send it to complaints@theskillsnetwork.com.

ALL formal complaints must be recorded on the Complaints System.

On receipt of a formal complaint, an Investigation Lead will be allocated within two working days. The Quality Directorate will then liaise with the Investigation Lead to investigate the issues raised. The Investigation Lead will be provided with details so that they have all of the information required to undertake the investigation. The Quality Directorate will continuously monitor the complaint until the issue has been resolved by the Investigation Lead.

Following the investigation, the outcomes/decision will be communicated to the complainant by their preferred method of contact by the Investigation Lead.

If the issues have been resolved, the complaint will be closed on the Complaint System.

Complaints should be raised within 12 months of the original issue so that evidence is available for the investigation.

All complaints will be looked into and investigated but this could be limited for anonymous complaints, or for one-star reviews received via Trust Pilot depending on the amount of information provided or available.

Complainants should be aware that malicious or vexatious complaints received in any form will result in disciplinary action where appropriate such as being withdrawn from a course or barred from studying further courses via The Skills Network (e.g. complaints that are not true, use of foul language in any communications that are sent to staff).

All complainants should be aware that The Skills Network staff have the right to work in a pleasant and safe environment and any violent or abusive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated. This includes in written or verbal communications

A Complaints Analysis will be produced and reports will be submitted to The Board on a regular basis concerning the nature of the complaints received for improvement purposes.

Any informal complaints resolved at first point of contact should be reported to the Complaints inbox for tracking, monitoring and improvement purposes.

Complaints and appeals process

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal against the decision within 10 working days of our response.

The appeal will be investigated by a manager independent of the original complaint appointed by the Executive Director of Delivery and Quality and the above timescales will apply. The outcome of this appeal concludes the complaints process.

If your complaint relates to a course funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the above Complaints and Appeals Process has been exhausted, you can contact the ESFA within twelve months of the complaint decision using these contact details:

Complaints Team Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road Coventry, CV1 2WT

ESFA complaints team Customer.Complaints@education.gov.uk

Equality and diversity

All complaints will be treated fairly and within the directives of The Skills Network's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. All complainants will be treated with respect and fairness throughout any investigations and processes linked to a complaint made.

