

Complaints Policy

V1.3

Family:	Human Resources
Manager Responsible:	Ashleigh Penny
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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 HR Manager, whilst day-to-day responsibility for implementation of this procedure lies with the Director of Curriculum and Quality.

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

All staff have a responsibility to forward formal complaints to the HR Department as soon as is practicable.

Making a complaint

Formal complaints can be made in the following ways:

By telephone – 01757 606667.

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 HR Manager.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Aims to have communicated the outcomes/decisions to the complainant within 15 working days.
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 from complaints received to improve and develop our services.

Procedure

If a learner has a concern, it should initially be raised with their Tutor or their Learner Support Advisor. 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 the HR Department.

External complainants can contact the HR Department directly using the contact details above.

ALL formal complaints must be sent to the HR Department to record on the Complaints System.

On receipt of a formal complaint by the HR Department, an Investigation Lead will be allocated within two working days. The HR Manager 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 HR Department will continuously monitor the complaint until the issue has been resolved.

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

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, depending on the amount of information provided or available.

Complainants should be aware that malicious complaints received in any form will result in disciplinary action where appropriate (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.

A Complaints Analysis will be produced and reports will be submitted to The Board of Directors on a regular basis concerning the nature of the complaints received for 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 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 these agencies within three months of the complaint decision using these contact details:

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

Tel: 0345 377 5000

EFA Complaints, Standards and Intervention Education Funding Agency,
Earlsdon Park 55 Butts Road Coventry, CV1 3BH

Equality and diversity

All complaints will be treated fairly and within the directives of the College's Single Equality Scheme. All complainants will be treated with respect and fairness throughout any investigations and processes linked to a complaint made.