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Complaints Policy

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Complaints Policy

1: Aim

WELL Associates regard stakeholder and learner feedback as critical to improving service delivery. The complaints policy aims to ensure all stakeholders know how to direct their concerns to the appropriate contacts within WELL, and when addressing their complaint to an external agency is warranted.

2: Rationale

All stakeholders and learners are advised of the WELL Complaints policy and advised as to where they can locate it in their learner resources.

All Apprentices are also talked through the Complaints Policy as part of their detailed induction and a printed and digital version of the Policy is provided as part of their Induction resources.

To ensure WELL can suitably investigate and resolve complaints, where such complaints involve WELL personnel, the company will need to provide individuals with the name of the person or persons making the complaint and the details that constitute the complaint.

The company will request permission to do this, not to have such information can obstruct a fair and robust investigation and as such there may be good cause to overturn the complaint.

If a stakeholder wishes to take a complaint to an external agency such as the funding agency it is important that the company procedure is fully exhausted before the external agency can get involved.

3: Complaint handling procedure

Verbal complaints:

Any verbal complaints received must be forwarded to the respective manager with a note on how it has been resolved whether it is on-going and what remedial action has or needs to be taken to resolve the complaint.

The relevant Verbal Complaint form should be completed by the individual who took the complaint and shared with the appropriate Manager and Line Manager, if different. These will be added to the customer record.

The Line manager will monitor the progress of the complaint until conclusion.

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They will also decide whether any procedures or processes need to be amended or whether the complaint requires a company-wide review and changes, or whether this is a potential individual staff performance issue.

The complaint resolution will be communicated to the Senior Management Team.

Any verbal complaint relating to qualifications should use the Qualification appeals and disputes procedure.

A complaint pertaining to the safety and/or wellbeing of an apprentice should be referred to one of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the complaint pertains to Senior Management Team or support personnel, the information should be directed to the Chief Executive and the company policies and procedures should be applied to secure a suitable resolution and actions taken recording on the central complaints log.

4: Written Complaints

If an apprentice, learner, employer, customer or other stakeholder wishes to make a formal complaint, this should be made in writing (including email) to the member of staff dealing with the complainant.

You can do this either completing a formal complaints form (available on your Learner Hub) or by writing in as much detail as possible the nature and detail of your complaint.

The complainant should provide as much detailed information as possible to enable a fair and thorough investigation to be undertaken.

The written complaint should be forwarded to an appropriate Line Manager and also recorded on the central complaints log.

5: Timescales

Submitted complaints are sent to the Manager's responsible. The appropriate Manager will reply to a formal complaint within 48 hours acknowledging the complaint.

If the complaint can be resolved immediately then the Manager will do so and notify the complainant.

If the complaint requires more detailed investigation and planning, the manager will reply to the complainant in writing or through email outlining the investigation to be undertaken with projected timescales.

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A full investigation of the complaint must be independently conducted by the appropriate manager or Director and a report written and agreed with the Chief Executive. The manager will present findings and solutions to the complainant.

Where possible this should be completed within 30 working days of the complaint being received.

Where a complaint has been resolved, the outcome will be noted on the central complaint log along with any follow-up actions required.

As required the original person receiving the complaint will check that the complainant is satisfied with the outcome and that the corrective action has been implemented.

WELL Associates reserves the right to not uphold a complaint, where the findings of the investigation find are compliant with their own policies and procedures and in no contravention with external regulations or rules.

In these circumstances the company will advise the complainant of their decision and the reasons for this.

In the case of a complaint, if you are dissatisfied with the managers handling of this, you can appeal to the Chief Executive who will investigate the matter further, seek to resolve the matter directly or involve any third party or legal advisor and give you a response in 10 working days.

6: Making a complaint to the Education & Skills Funding Agency

Where a complaint is made in connection to a government funded programme such as apprenticeships, the complainant has the right to involve the Education & Skills Funding Agency, however there are requirements that all complainants need to be advised of before they make an approach to the agency.

The following guidance, protocols should be adhered to:

- First try to resolve it with the provider, WELL Associates;
- The external agency will need to confirm that the company's complaint procedure has been fully exhausted before responding to a complaint (unless the complaint is an allegation relating to irregularity and/or fraudulent practice. In this situation the agency may see it as acceptable for the complaint to go direct to them).

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7: The Role of the Education & Skills Funding Agency

A complaint will be investigated in accordance with the Agency's procedure for investigating Complaints about Providers, a copy of which can be found at:

[Complaints procedure - Education and Skills Funding Agency - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/342221/complaints-procedure-education-and-skills-funding-agency.pdf)
(www.gov.uk)

The ESFA will assess the concerns and decide on the appropriate action. Where necessary, the team will refer concerns to other organisations such as the police or other government departments.

If contacting the Agency by telephone, they will explain their process and record information that the complainant is willing to provide.

The Agency will also ask the complainant to provide a summary of the concerns in a letter or email.

You must contact the ESFA within 3 months of getting a decision from your organisation. Email or post your complaint to the ESFA complaints team.

ESFA complaints team: complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

Complaints team

Education & Skills Funding Agency

Cheylesmore House

Quinton Road

Coventry

CV1 2WT

ESFA will acknowledge your complaint within 5 days and will let you know what will happen next.

If you're unhappy with the ESFA response

You can write to the complaints adjudicator to decide on your case if you're unhappy with how the ESFA has dealt with your complaint.

Complaints adjudicator

Legal and information compliance

Education & Skills Funding Agency

Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road

Coventry

CV1 2WT