

Policy title:	Comments, Compliments & Complaints Policy and Procedure	Date of Issue:	22/03/21
Owner:	Lee Johnston, Quality Manager	Issue Number:	21-1

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. TRS Training Limited listens to the views of all who use our services, we will use this information to learn from our mistakes and continually try to improve. We wish to encourage comments, compliments and complaints about our services.
- 1.2. Feedback from apprentices, employers, staff and stakeholders is welcomed as part of TRS Training Limited's approach to the development and enhancement of the quality of its services. Details of how this is gathered can be found in the Information, Advice and Guidance Policy.
- 1.3. The policy describes when compliments are accepted and how these are then used.
- 1.4. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service. Often when we are aware of a problem we can remedy it quickly.
- 1.5. TRS Training Limited is committed to taking all complaints seriously by:
 - Making the process of complaining as straightforward and easy as possible
 - Listening and responding to all written complaints
 - Investigating in a thorough and professional manner
 - Informing the complainant of any outcomes
 - Using the information gathered to improve our services and provide staff training if required
 - Making sure our complaints service is accessible to all
 - Providing a fair and transparent process
 - Ensuring confidentiality is preserved during the investigation of a complaint to safeguard the interests of everyone concerned unless disclosure is necessary to progress the complaint.

2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1. The policy is applicable to all learners, employers and stakeholders, as well as visitors, service users and people external to TRS Training Limited.
- 2.2. The Complaints Procedure does not apply where there are separate mechanisms in place:
 - Appeals against assessment decisions
 - Freedom of Information or Data Protection
 - Appeals or Complaints relating to the eligibility and application decisions made by an employer

3. TRS Values

This policy underpins our commitment to our values, with particular reference to:

- RESPECT – All individuals and their unique talents
- SUPPORT – A strong ethos of care, guidance and support for all
- RESPOND – Listening to our customers, partners and stakeholders and being equipped to meet their changing needs
- PARTNERS – Developing sustainable partnerships where everyone involved benefits from the relationship

- QUALITY – Providing outstanding teaching, learning and customer service
- DEVELOPMENT – Supporting continuous professional development for all staff

4. Implementation Principles

- 4.1. **Comments** - Comments are shared with the management team who will consider any action and response as necessary.
- 4.2. **Compliments** - Compliments received are shared with the member(s) of staff, their Line Manager(s) and the Senior Management Team. If a compliment is used by TRS Training Limited in any of its publications, an acknowledgement letter will be sent to the originator expressing TRS Training Limited's gratitude and detailing how the compliment has been used.
- 4.3. Any compliments that are received by staff that makes them feel uncomfortable or relate to personal appearances should be challenged. All staff should refer these incidents to a line manager for advice on what actions should be taken.

4.4. Complaints

- 4.4.1. There are three stages to the complaints procedure: informal, formal and appeal. Where possible informal suggestions and complaints should be dealt with and addressed by relevant staff in order to prevent the formal process being triggered.
 - 4.4.2. If the formal process (Stage 2) is triggered the procedure identifies the key stages through which a complaint is processed.
 - 4.4.3. The Comments Compliments and Complaints procedure is communicated to apprentices through the Induction process, through their progress reviews and handbooks and on TRS Training Limited's website.
 - 4.4.4. Complainants will register formal complaints in the following ways:
 - In writing, by letter, by email to admin@trstraining.net
 - or through the complaints form available
 - Through TRS Training Limited Website www.trstrainingltd.com
 - 4.4.5. Complaints made directly to the directors will be referred to Stage 1 (Informal) or Stage 2 (Formal) of this Procedure dependent on the nature of the complaint.
 - 4.4.6. In the event of an appeal (Stage 3) against the outcome of an investigation, an independent member of TRS Training Limited Management Team will review the nature of the complaint and analyse the Investigating Officer's findings and report the outcome of the appeal to the Board, who will then notify the complainant of this outcome.
- 4.5. A central database will record suggestions, compliments and complaints information.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1. Investigating Officers will be drawn from TRS Training Limited Management Team.

5.2. The Quality Manager will ensure that complaints are processed effectively.

6. Policy Monitoring and reporting arrangements

6.1. The Quality Manager will present a report to the Board on annual trends and will provide overall monitoring of the process including any actions arising.

6.2. The policy and procedure will be reviewed and approved bi-annually by the Board.

Complaints Procedure

1. Stage 1: Informal Complaint

- 1.1. The purpose of this stage is to try to satisfactorily resolve a complaint at a local level in the shortest possible time; every effort will be made to resolve complaints immediately and in an informal way. If it is not possible to resolve the complaint at the informal stage or the nature of the complaint makes this stage inappropriate, it will be necessary to proceed directly to the formal complaints section.
- 1.2. Stage 1 concerns should be raised immediately and no later than three months after their occurrence.
- 1.3. Individuals can raise issues or make an informal complaint in a variety of ways. These include taking the complaint to the trainer, employer or invigilator.
- 1.4. Should an individual have cause to complain about any aspect of our provision, they are encouraged initially to approach the relevant member of staff in the first instance who will deal with the situation as required.

2. Stage 2: Formal Complaint

- 2.1. Individuals may wish to, either because of the nature of the complaint or because of the result of Stage 1, progress to Stage 2 of the procedures. Stage 2 is the beginning of the formal process. Formal complaints must always be in writing.
- 2.2. Stage 2 concerns should be raised within three months of exhausting all other processes.
- 2.3. Anybody can raise an issue or make a formal complaint by completing the Comments Complaints Compliments form, the enquiry form on TRS Training Limited's website contact page or by sending a letter or email to the Quality Manager.
- 2.4. The complaint will be acknowledged by letter or email within 5 working days of receipt by the Quality Manager (subject to staff availability due to holidays or illness).
- 2.5. A senior manager will be appointed as the Investigating Officer who will conduct a thorough and fair review of the complaint and will speak to all parties concerned: this may involve contacting the complainant if the nature of the complaint is complex. At the end of the investigation the complainant will be contacted by the Quality Manager who will inform them of the outcome of the investigation. Normally the complainant will be notified of the outcome of their complaint within 15 working days of its receipt (although this period may be extended, subject to staff availability, holidays or illness). The Quality Manager will notify them if this process is likely to take longer.
- 2.6. If the Investigating Officer reports that a complaint was justified, remedial action will be taken as soon as possible to address the problem. If the Investigating Officer reports that a complaint was unjustified, no further action will be taken. The complainant has the right to register an appeal against the outcome by writing to the Quality Manager within 15 working days of date of receipt.

3. Stage 3: Appeals Procedure

- 3.1. The complainant needs to inform the Quality Manager of their wish to appeal and the nature of the appeal. The Quality Manager will appoint an independent senior manager to investigate. The senior manager will review the nature of the complaint, analyse the Investigating Officer's findings and report the outcome of the appeal to the Quality Manager. On completion of the review the senior manager will choose one of the following three options based on the evidence gained.

- Uphold the original decision
- Change the outcome based on the evidence presented
- Continue and extend the investigation

3.2. At the end of the investigation the senior manager will make a final decision. The Quality Manager will inform the complainant of the outcome through the issue of a “Completion of Procedures” letter. The Appeal Stage is the final stage of the internal Complaints Procedure within TRS Training Limited.

4. Complaints relating to members of staff

The following applies to complaints relating to members of staff:

- 4.1. The Quality Manager will decide if appropriate to follow the complaints procedure or another policy or procedure.
- 4.2. The Quality Manager will inform appropriate manager, usually the line manager to trigger investigation.
- 4.3. Dependent on the content of the letter/complaint form, the line manager will outline in detail the nature of the complaint to the member of staff. Where necessary the complainant’s name will be withheld. Note that data protection requires that if the member of staff chooses, they may use their legal right to view the documentation using the appropriate channels although in certain circumstances identification of the complainant can be withheld.
- 4.4. The investigating manager will discuss the issues with all concerned (staff and apprentices where this is possible) and make a judgement on the justification of the complaint.
- 4.5. In the case of an unjustified outcome, the Quality Manager will issue the standard letter and line manager will inform the member of staff.
- 4.6. In the case of justified or partially justified complaint, the Quality Manager and the investigating officer will agree content where appropriate. The investigating officer will then meet with the member of staff to share the contents of the letter. This may in serious cases signal the implementation of other formal procedures.
- 4.7. The member of staff will have sight of the letter prior to its release, which briefly reflects the justification as found by the manager investigating the complaint.
- 4.8. If the complaint is justified and the matter referred to other procedures, the appeals process will be available under these procedures.
- 4.9. In some cases, justified complaints can trigger the Performance Procedure. Managers need to be aware that a justified complaint should not circumvent other action. The letters sent in response to a justified complaint should be brief.

5. External redress

5.1. If a complainant wishes to complain about how a complaint has been handled, and all internal procedures have been exhausted, they may wish to contact the relevant agency, as detailed below:

Education and Skills Funding Agency ESFA

Email: complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

Address: The Complaints Team, Education and Skills Funding Agency Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House Quinton Road Coventry CV1 2WT

Guidance can be found at www.gov.uk [Complaints about post 16 education and training provision funded by ESFA - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa)

Guidance Notes – How to Deal with a Complaint

Investigating Officers

- As a member of TRS Training Limited Management Team, you may be asked to investigate a complaint. Investigating Officers will be managers who are directly involved in the area of work against which the complaint has been made unless, in the context of the complaint, this is deemed inappropriate, in which case an objective officer shall be appointed.

The Investigation

- The investigation must be conducted in strict accordance with all the tenets of natural justice i.e. fair and consistent.
- The Investigating Officer should conduct the investigation ensuring that evidence statements etc. are obtained from all parties to the complaint. All notes should be retained and returned to the Quality Manager. Any staff named in correspondence must be notified of the outcome by the Investigating Officer.
- The Investigating Officer has 10 working days to conduct a thorough and fair review of the complaint: this may involve contacting the complainant if the nature of the complaint is complex. After day 5, the Quality Manager will send a red email reminder alert to the Investigating Officer. A formal written report and response letter should be received and logged by the Quality Manager by day 12 of the investigation. This document will then be proof read along with all supporting investigation material.
- The outcome of the complaint will be conveyed, by letter, to the complainant. All letters will be approved in terms of content by the Investigating Officer, the Quality Manager and a member of the Senior Management Team before dispatch.
- The Quality Manager will notify the complainant if this process is likely to take longer.

Appeals

- If the complainant disagrees with the outcome of the investigation, the Quality Manager records the details of the appeal and forwards them to a member of Senior Management Team. The SMT member will then review the manner in which the complaint has been investigated and the basis on which the conclusion was reached. They will then inform the Quality Manager of the appeal conclusion who will then inform the complainant of the final decision within 10 working days.

COMPLAINTS - Investigating Officer Report:

Investigating Officer's Report Complaint Ref:		
Complaint from:		
Employer:		
Date complaint received:		
Received by:		
Investigating Officer:		
Deadline for IO to return to Quality:		
Nature of complaint:	(attach correspondence received)	
Acknowledgement sent:		
Outline the Course of your Investigation, i.e. people interviewed, information gathered etc.		
Rationale for Outcome:		
Do you consider the complaint to be justified?		YES / NO
Where the complaint relates to a member of staff, has the member of staff concerned been informed of the outcome and seen your written response?		YES / NO
If 'no' please state why this is the case		
Response to Complainant:		
This section will be copied into the main body of the standard outcome letter THIS MUST BE WRITTEN IN LETTER FORMAT		
Is there anything that can be learnt following the investigation?		
Action Taken		