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| Document title: | Comments, Compliments & Complaints Policy and Procedure | Owner: | Beverley Ellis, Operations Director |
| Version Number: | 23-2 | Previous Version: | 23-1 |
| Date of Issue: | 10/08/2023 | Date for review: | 22/03/2024 |
| This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Operations Director: | | |  10/08/23 |

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 learners, employers, staff and stakeholders is welcomed as part of TRS Training Limited's approach to the development and enhancement of the quality of our services. Details of how this is gathered can be found in the Quality Policy.
- 1.3. This 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, staff, employers and stakeholders, as well as visitors, service users and people external to TRS Training Limited.
- 2.2. A **complaint** is **any** expression of dissatisfaction with our services or the conduct of our staff which requires a response from us.
- 2.3. 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 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 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 and for their support.

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 to prevent the formal process being triggered.
- 4.4.2. If the formal process (Stage 2) is triggered the Complaints Procedure (Appendix A) identifies the key stages through which a complaint is processed.
- 4.4.3. The Comments Compliments and Complaints policy and accompanying procedure is communicated to learners 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
Beverley Ellis
Operations Director
TRS Training Limited
4 Micklehead Business Village
St Michaels Road
St Helens
Merseyside
WA9 4YU
or
 - through the Contact Form available on 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 decision to uphold their complaint.

4.4.7. If a complainant wishes is dissatisfied with our internal processes and their complaint relates to a qualification through CILT(UK) they can escalate this to:

ao@ciltuk.org.uk

Awarding Organisation Manager
CILT (UK) Awarding Organisation
Earlstrees Court
Earlstrees Road
Corby
Northamptonshire
NN17 4AX

A full copy of CILT(UK)'s complaints policy is available at [AO-REG-0045 CILT\(UK\) AO Complaints Policy V3.0 260521.pdf \(ciltuk.org.uk\)](#)

4.4.8. If a complainant wishes to complain about how a complaint has been handled that relates to a government funded course, and all internal procedures have been exhausted, they may wish to contact the relevant agency at:

ESFA complaints team

email: complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk

Or write to:

Complaints team
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

4.5. A central database will record suggestions, compliments and complaints information.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Department Managers are responsible for ensuring this policy is shared with learners and employers.

5.2. The Operations Director will appoint an Investigating Officer from the TRS Training Limited Management Team.

5.3. The Investigating Officer will conduct the investigation in line with the procedures in Appendix A and within the timelines specified.

5.4. The Operations Director will ensure that complaints are processed effectively.

6. Policy Monitoring and reporting arrangements

6.1. The Operations Director 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 annually by the Board.

7. Summary of Revisions

| Version | Date | Revision |
|---------|------------|--|
| 23-2 | 10/08/2023 | 4.4.7 Included references to complaints about CILT(UK) qualifications and how they can be escalated. |
| 23-1 | 22/03/2023 | Changed "apprentices" to learners |
| 23-1 | 22/03/2023 | 1.2 Changed Information, Advice and Guidance Policy to Quality Policy |
| 21-1 | 22/03/2021 | Added in support comment for compliments |
| 22-1 | 22/03/2022 | Changed Quality Manager to Operations Director in line with structural staff changes. |
| 22-1 | 22/03/2022 | Approved for use by Operations Director |

APPENDIX A

Complaints Procedure

1. Stage 1: Informal Complaint

- 1.1. The purpose of this stage is to try to resolve a complaint satisfactorily 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 procedure. 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. Complainants can register formal complaints in the following ways:
 - In writing, by letter, by email to admin@trstraining.net
or
Beverley Ellis
Operations Director
TRS Training Limited
4 Micklehead Business Village
St Michaels Road
St Helens
Merseyside
WA9 4YU
or
 - through the Contact Form available on TRS Training Limited Website www.trstrainingltd.com
- 2.4. The complaint will be acknowledged by letter or email within 5 working days of receipt by the Operations Director (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

Operations Director 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 Operations Director 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 Operations Director within 15 working days of date of receipt.
- 2.7. The Operations Director will notify the Board of the nature of the complaint raised and its outcome.

3. Stage 3: Appeals Procedure

- 3.1. The complainant needs to inform the Operations Director of their wish to appeal and the nature of the appeal. The Operations Director 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 Operations Director, who will inform the Board. 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 recommend a final decision to the Board. The Board will decide whether to support this decision or ask for further investigations to be conducted. The Operations Director 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.
- 3.3. The Appeals Stage will take up to 10 days to complete all activities and respond to the complainant.

4. Complaints relating to members of staff

The following applies to complaints relating to members of staff:

- 4.1. The Operations Director will decide if it is appropriate to follow the complaints procedure or another policy or procedure.
- 4.2. The Operations Director 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, such as a safeguarding case.
- 4.4. The investigating manager will discuss the issues with all concerned (staff and learners where this is possible) and make a judgement on the justification of the complaint.
- 4.5. In the case of an unjustified outcome, the Operations Director will issue the standard letter and the line manager will inform the member of staff.

- 4.6. In the case of justified or partially justified complaint, the Operations Director 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 is 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 at:

ESFA complaints team

email: complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk

Or write to:

Complaints team
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Guidance can be found at [Complain about a further education college or apprenticeship - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complain-about-a-further-education-college-or-apprenticeship)

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 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, and without prejudice, 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 Operations Director. 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 Operations Director will send an email reminder alert to the Investigating Officer. A formal written report and response letter should be received and logged by the Operations Director by day 12 of the investigation. This document will then be proofread along with all supporting investigation material.
- The outcome of the complaint will be conveyed, by letter, to the complainant with 15 days. All letters will be approved in terms of content by the Investigating Officer, the Operations Director and a member of the Senior Management Team before dispatch.
- The Operations Director will notify the complainant if this process is likely to take longer.

Appeals

- If the complainant disagrees with the outcome of the investigation, the Operations Director records the details of the appeal and forwards them to the Board. The Board will then review the way the complaint has been investigated and the basis on which the conclusion was reached. They will then inform the Operations Director of the appeal conclusion who will then inform the complainant of the final decision within 10 working days.

COMPLAINTS - Investigating Officer Report:

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| 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: | | |
| 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? | | 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? | | N/A |
| 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 | | |