

Complaints Policy (inc. Procedure and Process)



Our responsibilities

At FIT UK Training and education (**FIT UK**) we are committed to providing a high-quality service to our learners and the communities we work in. FIT UK has a system in place that ensures all complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly and appropriately. Complaints will be dealt with and no recrimination and learners will not be disadvantaged by raising a complaint.

We will be fair in the treatment of all those who complain irrespective of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics and whilst socio-economic background is not a legally protected characteristic, FIT UK is committed to combating any discrimination on this basis and recognises the harm that discrimination has in terms of an individual's access to equality of opportunity). Complaints will be dealt with promptly and constructively. All complaints will be dealt with in confidence but shared with any person who may be the subject of a complaint. The outcomes of any complaint will be shared with the complainant and any staff involved. Complaints made which, on investigation, turn out to be malicious, may result in disciplinary action.

The Operations Director will be responsible for the management of the Complaints Policy and all learners will be informed whom the Operations Director is.

Scope of Complaints Procedure

The Procedure deals with complaints arising from but not exhaustive:

- Delivery (or lack of delivery) of services for education and training including teaching, course content, tutoring, assessment, feedback on progress and learner support during learning programmes
- Incorrect or misleading information about services provided by the Centre
- Delivery (or lack of delivery) of support services provided by the Centre including administration of fees, enrolment processes, centre accommodation, health and safety and learner resource services
- Unacceptable actions or behaviour by centre staff\ trainers and/or other learners in the Centre

Separate procedures exist for:

- Learner discipline

- Assessment appeals

Related Documentation

- Complaints Procedure and Process (3.07a/ 3.07b) attached below
- Complaints register
- Formal written complaint as a letter or email

Quality Improvement

1. The Quality Department will be informed of all formal and/or serious complaints to either act as the appointed appropriate investigating officer, or to offer support and guidance to the appointed appropriate independent investigating officer

2. This is to ensure that all investigations are carried out fairly and the evidence collected is given due consideration. Also, that the findings are reported in full and accurately to ensure a transparent process.

3. Where a panel of three appropriate representatives of FIT UK is required at least one member of the Quality Department will be appointed. This will not be the person who has acted as the investigating officer or has offered support and guidance to the investigating officer.

4. Annual review by Senior Management Team will review the Complaints policy and practice to include

- Number of complaints of each type
- Time taken to process complaints
- List of outstanding complaints
- Outcomes of complaints
- Results of appeals
- Analysis of complaints and outcomes by age, gender and ethnicity of complainant

A record of all complaints for the previous 3 years will be available to the relevant authorities for audit purposes. If changes are required, the Complaints Policy will be re-written, and all staff and learners will be informed.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints Procedure 2023/24

1.0 Introduction

1.1 FIT UK Training and Education Ltd (known as FIT UK) prides itself on delivering first class customer service at all times. The delivery of an outstanding customer experience is a key aspect of our strategic objective and organisational values.

1.2 However, FIT UK also recognises that sometimes things may not meet these high standards. It actively encourages feedback from a range of service users and will be open and transparent in its resolution of complaints and in learning lessons from them.

1.3 This procedure aims to ensure that complaints are resolved promptly and fairly. The procedure covers all areas of FIT UK activity. The procedure can therefore be used by any learner, apprentice, parent, employer, member of staff, visitor, contractor or member of the local community who has reason to be unhappy with the service provided by FIT UK.

1.4 The procedure covers complaints in whatever form they are received, we encourage feedback both positive and negative through a range of channels including – over the telephone, in person with a specific member of staff, via the enquiries FIT UK's website and via social media channels and written correspondence. In whatever form complaints are received, the principles of this procedure shall still apply.

1.5 We strongly believe that most issues can be resolved quickly and at the informal stage of our process. However, for more serious incidents or incidents where the informal stage has not been able to resolve matters there are two furthermore formal stages to the complaints process and then recourse for individuals to take their complaint to external bodies who have oversight of the quality and funding for all aspects of FIT UK's provision.

2.0 Stage 1 – Informal resolution

2.1 Many issues or complaints can be resolved quickly through this stage of the procedure and where possible it is often best to do so. Matters at the informal stage can be best dealt with by the appropriate member of staff (e.g. tutor, curriculum manager or member of support staff).

2.2 All staff within FIT UK are empowered to resolve issues to the satisfaction of both parties and may seek the advice of more senior members of staff to do so. Feedback and resolution to issues raised may be immediate in some cases, however it may be necessary for the member of staff to gather more information before concluding; as such it is expected that informal complaints will be resolved within 5 working days.

2.3 In many cases the outcome of an informal complaint will be communicated verbally. FIT UK does not require written confirmation of outcome unless this is specifically requested by the complainant.

Complaints Policy, Procedure & Process

2.4 As informal complaints or suggestions for improvement are dealt with as part of our routine business there is no need for these issues to be logged with the Operations Director unless the member of staff dealing with the issue feels that this would add value to the FIT UK's quality improvement mechanisms.

3.0 Stage 2 – Formal complaint

3.1 If resolution cannot be found at the informal stage or matters are too significant for the informal approach to be appropriate individuals may wish to make a formal complaint.

3.2 A formal complaint must be made within three months of the issue first arising and must be made in writing to:

Operations Director, FIT UK Training and Education Ltd, Titan Business Centre, Bradford Rd, Birstall, WF17 9PH

or via the enquiries form available on the FIT UK's website: enquiries@fituk.info

Alternatively, formal complaints can be provided over the telephone by calling the Head Office number: 08445 790979

3.3 FIT UK will take action on anonymous complaints in exceptional circumstances and where it felt that matters are significant and serious enough to warrant investigation without knowing the details of the complainant.

3.4 The Operations Director will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint within two working days from receipt of the formal complaint.

3.5 An investigating officer, usually a senior manager from within the sector to the complaint will be identified by the Operations Director. In particularly serious matters a member of the Board of Directors (with the exception of the Director of Education) may be asked to act as investigating officer.

3.6 All complaints made directly to FIT UK will be logged as per the procedure above with an investigating officer appointed as per points 3.5 above.

3.7 Upon receipt of the complaint, the investigating officer will consider the issues raised by the complaint and may contact the complainant to gather further information. In addition, the investigating officer may contact other members of staff or interview other individuals in conducting their investigation. They will respond in writing to the complainant within ten working days. Their response will summarise their findings, propose a resolution if appropriate and/or state whether their investigation has upheld the issues raised by the complainant. A copy of the response will be provided to the Operations Director for logging in the central complaints record.

3.8 In certain circumstances, the deadlines stated above may need to be extended to enable a thorough and proper investigation to be conducted. This may be of particular relevance during holiday periods to allow for key staff to be available as part of the investigation. If such an extension is necessary, this will be communicated to the complainant in writing.

4.0 Stage 3 – Internal Appeal

4.1 In most cases complaints can be resolved within stage two. However, it may be that the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution proposed or outcome of the complaint. In these instances, individuals have the right to appeal.

4.2 Appeals should be made in writing to the Director of Education and should be made within ten working days from the receipt of the original response letter.

4.3 The Director of Education will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within two working days. The Director of Education will then consider the original investigation, any evidence that was not considered as part of the original complaint and the reasonableness of the proposed resolution. The Director of Education will determine whether the appeal has grounds and will respond in writing within ten working days from the date of receipt.

4.4 The response made by the Director of Education will outline whether the appeal has been upheld in full, partially or not at all and may suggest an alternative resolution to that proposed in the original response.

4.5 In certain circumstances, the deadlines stated above may need to be extended to enable a thorough and proper investigation to be conducted. This may be of particular relevance during holiday periods to allow for key staff to be available as part of the investigation. If such an extension is necessary, this will be communicated to the complainant in writing.

4.6 The decision of the Director of Education is final and as such internal procedures for complaints are deemed to have been exhausted at this stage. The written notification of appeal will also represent a formal 'Completion of Procedures'. In all instances information about how the complainant can seek external review of matters will be provided.

5.0 Continuing a complaint beyond FIT UK

5.1 For all related issues, individuals have the right to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>

5.2 The ESFA will want to satisfy themselves that the internal complaints processes of the college have been exhausted prior to acting upon complaints.

Complaints Policy Process

