



Complaints Policy

Introduction

We strive to provide the highest quality services and to be responsive to concerns or complaints from any of our stakeholders. Both negative and positive feedback is recognised as a valuable resource to enable us to improve the quality of our services.

Scope

The Derbyshire Networks Complaints Policy & Procedure provides the framework within which anyone who has experienced dissatisfaction with the organisation are able to raise their concerns and also aid staff to effectively deal with complaints from learners, parents, customers, employers, sub-contractors, visitors and any other stakeholders.

The complaints procedure covers any expression of dissatisfaction or concern about:

- Provisions of TDN affecting customers (Applicants, learners, parents, customers, employers, sub-contractors, visitors and any other stakeholders)
- Actions or lack of actions by TDN or its staff
- Standards of service, courses or facilities provided by TDN.

The procedure does not cover the following:

- Matters covered by separate policies or procedures; including Appeals Procedure, Equal Opportunities, Grievance procedure.
- Judgement about individual Apprentice performance or awarding organisation assessment decisions
- Requests for new services or provision

Confidentiality and Support

All complaints will be treated seriously, handled sensitively and with due consideration to all parties involved. In line with our equal opportunities policy, all complainants will be treated fairly and not suffer any retribution or disadvantage as a result of making a complaint. Any person named in a complaint, however will be informed and have a right of reply as part of the investigative process.

Complaints must be made by complainants themselves, however we recognise that some Learners and vulnerable adults may have difficulties with this and so encourage them to use whatever assistance is required from a third party to make their complaint effectively. TDN staff can provide general support and advice on procedures; however it is the complainant's responsibility to seek guidance and support when necessary.

Stage 1 - Informal Stage

It is recognised that many concerns will be raised informally that can and should be dealt with immediately. Normally these concerns should be raised promptly and directly with the relevant tutor, assessor, internal quality assurer or manager/supervisor. Similarly concerns should be raised promptly and directly with the individual against whom there is a concern. In cases where this may not be possible, there are a number of people who could be approached. The aim is to resolve informal concerns quickly, keep matters low-key and enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the matter has been referred. This is entirely appropriate where it can be achieved.

Informal complaints will be responded to by the most appropriate person within 7 days receipt of the complaint.

If concerns are not satisfactorily resolved in this way Complainants may follow The Derbyshire Networks Formal Procedures for handling Complaints as specified below.

Stage 2 - Formal Stage

TDN recognises that informal mechanisms may not resolve all problems and that some problems may be too serious or sensitive to be dealt with by raising the issue directly with the member of staff involved. In these circumstances, the formal complaints procedure should be used.

The formal procedures are intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

A formal complaint should be submitted to:

The Derbyshire Network
Victoria Place
Victoria Road
Ripley
Derbyshire
DE3 5FW

Or emailed to help@thederbyshirenetwork.org

The statement of complaint should be as thorough and complete as possible and include any supporting documentation. The most appropriate member of staff will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 48 hours.

The complaint will be investigated within 28 working days of receipt and the findings recorded. The complainant will receive confirmation of the outcome of investigation. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response received as a result of Stage 2, the complaint may be taken to Stage 3 of the procedure.

Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and The Derbyshire Network observe the confidential nature of issues. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it might not be possible to maintain confidentiality and each complaint will be judged on its own merit. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant and/or their representative. In the case of young people raising a complaint who are aged below 18 The Derbyshire Network are obliged to inform their parent/guardian.

Stage 3 – Appeal

A copy of the complaint (with any supporting evidence) should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) within 14 days of receiving the Stage 2 response. The CEO will hear the complaint and review the evidence. The CEO will investigate the complaint, including all documentary evidence.

- The CEO may seek to resolve the complaint based on the documentary evidence alone.
- Following investigation, a written response will be produced detailing whether the complaint is upheld or not and detailing action(s) necessary to resolve the issue.
- The decision of the CEO is final, although learners may appeal to the Awarding Body or Funding body once the internal appeals decision has been exhausted.

Awarding Body Complaint

Where the Awarding Body allows, if the complainant is unable to reasonably resolve a complaint directly with the Centre they are permitted to appeal directly to the Awarding Body responsible for that qualification. *see appendix A

If the Complainants still remains unhappy with the final decision that is made by the awarding body the learner can then raise their appeal to the Qualification Regulator (Ofqual) whose decision will be final.

Funding Agency Complaint

Should further escalation be required, the Complainant should contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency, for apprenticeships via the Apprenticeship Helpline 0800 0150400 or nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk. For all other training contact the Complaints Team, The Office of the Chief Executive, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT or email complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency will not usually investigate complaints until the provider's procedure, including the appeal, has been exhausted. If the Education and Skills Funding Agency believes that the provider is not dealing with a complaint appropriately or effectively, they may intervene before the provider's procedure has been exhausted.

Complaints Form

It is anticipated that most complaints can be resolved through informal means. However if the individual is not satisfied with the outcome or feels that this approach is not appropriate then a resolution should be sort by more formal means.

Please use this form to summarise the complaint and outline the resolution you are seeking.

Name:	
Address	
	Postcode
Email	
Phone No./Mobile	
Training Provider (if applicable)	
Name of Employer (if applicable)	

Please summarise your complaint below.

Your complaint must be specific and where possible, supported by documentary evidence. Please also detail any informal attempts to resolve the complaint and the outcome:

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Please outline the resolution you are seeking:

Complainants Signature	Date