

CRAFT Training

Complaints Procedure



Key Principles

- 1 The General Manager of CRAFT Training should be receptive to genuine expressions of dissatisfaction.
- 2 Complaints should be dealt with promptly, fairly and proportionately.
- 3 Action taken as a result of complaints should help to improve the quality of education provided by CRAFT Training.
- 4 In dealing with complaints the General Manager will take account of its duty to promote equality and diversity.
- 5 CRAFT Training should ensure learners understand all details of the complaints procedure.
- 6 CRAFT Training should have an appeals process to deal with any challenges to the decision reached.
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- 8 CRAFT Training should ensure that learners are given relevant information about such procedures and that they are provided with relevant contact details for the General Manager when complaints cannot be resolved by the Branch Manager.

When the General Manager will investigate:

- 9 **We must investigate** all allegations of irregularity (unlawful or unethical conduct, financial malpractice, equality and diversity issues and health and safety risks to staff, learners or the public).
- 10 **We can investigate** complaints about:
 - The quality or management of learning provision.
 - Undue delay or non-compliance with published procedures.
 - Poor administration.
 - Equality and diversity issues.
 - Health and safety concerns.
- 11 We reserve the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious.

What the General Manager will do:

- 12 On receipt of a complaint the appropriate officer should check:
 - The matter is one which the General Manager can investigate;
 - If the decision or action complained about occurred more than three months ago. Where this is the case the General Manager will not normally investigate, unless the complainant has good reason for the delay in making the complaint;
 - Whether the allegations relate to fraud or irregularity. In these cases, the appropriate officer shall notify the PSNI to discuss appropriate investigate procedures.
- 13 Within five working days of receipt of a complaint the appropriate officer should acknowledge receipt and send a copy of this procedure to the complainant. The complainant should be told whether the complaint is one which the General Manager will investigate. In cases alleging fraud or irregularity the complainant should be informed of the involvement of the PSNI and the procedures which will be followed.
- 14 If the General Manager is to investigate the matter, the complainant should be asked to provide:
 - Details of their complaint in writing, by email or letter.
 - Confirmation that the provider's complaints procedures have been exhausted.
 - Permission to disclose details of their complaint to the provider concerned.
- 15 If the complainant has difficulties in providing details in writing, the appropriate officer should consider alternative ways of receiving the information.
- 16 Within five working days of receipt of the written complaint the appropriate officer should prepare a summary of the complaint to be sent to the complainant for approval. The complainant should be given five working days to provide any response to this document.
- 17 The appropriate officer should consider any response from the complainant and amend the summary of complaint before sending this to the provider. The provider should be asked to provide within 10 working days:
 - Details and copies of the relevant procedures where appropriate.
 - Confirmation that their procedures have been exhausted.
 - a response to the summary of complaint together with relevant documentation.
 - Confirmation that the information provided can be shown to the complainant. With regard to investigations by PSNI, anonymity will be respected as long as it does not impede any investigations.
- 18 If, at any stage, the appropriate officer is satisfied that procedures at the provider have not been properly exhausted they should usually write to the parties to indicate that they will not investigate the matter further. Where the appropriate officer judges that the provider has unduly delayed in resolving the complaint, or that there is no prospect of the provider resolving the complaint within a reasonable timescale, the General Manager may continue to investigate.
- 19 On receipt of documentation and response from the provider the appropriate officer shall provide the provider's response to the complainant and seek confirmation within five working days as to whether the complainant remains dissatisfied.

- 20 The appropriate officer should consider whether the complaint may be resolved by mediation and, if the parties agree, should arrange for a mediation meeting.
- 21 If the matter has not been resolved within 20 working days of agreeing the summary with the complainant, the appropriate officer should consider each aspect of the summary of complaint and determine whether, on the balance of probabilities, the complaint should be upheld.
- 22 If the appropriate officer cannot resolve the position on the information available, he or she shall arrange for the parties to be contacted to obtain such further information as is required. If necessary the appropriate officer can arrange to meet with either or both of the parties. The information received and notes of any meeting should normally be disclosed to both parties.
- 23 Once a provisional decision has been made in relation to the complaint, draft findings should be sent to the parties providing them with an opportunity to respond within five working days.
- 24 Responses should be considered before the appropriate officer confirms the findings. This document should be finalised within five working days and sent to the parties. This concludes the investigation.
- 25 If at any point during the investigation, the appropriate officer encounters a delay in responding to/providing correspondence, the complainant should be notified of the delay and be given details when a response will be provided.

What action the General Manager can take

- 26 If a complaint is upheld, the General Manager shall consider taking action against the provider in accordance with the key principles. The General Manager may:
- Ask the provider to review its procedure to ensure non-recurrence.
 - Ask the provider to review its decision in the individual case.
 - In cases of financial irregularity, recover funds and refer matters to the police (where there is evidence of a crime).