

	Lifelong Learning and Skills	Staff Guidance	Review cycle:	Annually
		Complaints Policy	Date of last review:	July 2024
			Issued by:	Richard Smith (Interim) Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills
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Scope

Lifelong Learning and Skills aims to provide an outstanding service to learners and employers, but occasionally issues do occur. Most concerns can be resolved by dialogue between the learner/employer and staff concerned without having to raise a formal complaint. However, if this is not appropriate, or does not resolve matters satisfactorily, then a formal complaint may be made.

This policy covers all learners recruited onto courses delivered through LLS, and employers offering apprenticeships or work experience opportunities.

If the complaint is in relation to any assessment process or assessment outcomes, the guidance in relation to Assessment Appeals process must be followed (contact the quality team if you need further advice).

Anonymous complaints – LLS reserves the right not to investigate anonymous complaints.

Vexatious complaints – a vexatious complaint is one which is made with the intention to cause inconvenience, harassment, or expense to an organisation. If it is demonstrated that a complaint has no basis or is a repetition of a previous complaint for which the complaints procedure has been followed and exhausted, it may be classed as a vexatious complaint. Every complaint that is received by LLS will be considered. Where a senior manager has good reason to believe that a complaint is vexatious, it will be acknowledged, recorded and no further action taken.

Purpose

- To ensure learners and employers are given all the necessary information to make a complaint regarding the service they have received.
- To provide an open and fair method for dealing with alleged failure to meet acceptable standards of service.
- To ensure complaints are heard and used to bring about improvements.

Objectives

The policy and process has been designed to make sure that people who wish to make a complaint are:

- taken seriously
- told who is dealing with the complaint and when a reply can be expected
- given a full and timely response

- kept informed of what is happening, with an explanation of any delays
- told about what to do next if they feel the complaint is not resolved to their satisfaction.

This procedure also gives an opportunity for LLS to review, evaluate and address issues raised to support the service's continuous quality improvement.

Process

- A formal complaint to be made to Head of Service either in writing or via email.
- Head of Service to acknowledge receipt of complaint in writing and pass complaint to appropriate Service Manager within 3 working days.
- Service Manager to investigate complaint that may include
 - Interviewing/liasing with the complainant
 - Interviewing the relevant members of staff involved
 - Conferring with Head of Service to agree outcome
- Service Manager to confirm the outcome in writing within 28 calendar days of the start of the investigation.
 - If complaint is upheld, to include an apology and any appropriate details of action taken
 - If it is not upheld, complainant to be informed of outcome and given details of how to initiate a new, separate complaint regarding the way in which their initial complaint has been dealt with or its outcome through Sheffield City Council's complaints procedure, details of which are available at: [Making a complaint \(sheffield.gov.uk\)](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk)

LLS Delivery Staff Obligations

- All learners must be made aware of the complaints procedure that is appropriate for the activity they are undertaken
- All staff must ensure that the procedure is fully understood by learners at induction.
- LLS staff to follow procedure as described below.
- All funded learners must be made aware of any regulated complaints procedures associated with their funding.
- All employers to be made aware of the complaints procedure when they are providing an employment or work experience opportunity.

Expectations of Learners / Employers

- It is expected that learners / employers will initially attempt to resolve any issues of concern informally through discussion with an appropriate member of staff in the first instance.
- If a formal complaint is submitted, learners / employers will be expected to:
 - explain their complaint reasonably, clearly and fully
 - describe what they have done about the issue so far
 - give LLS time to deal with the complaint in accordance with the process described in this policy

- recognise that some circumstances are beyond the control of LLS
- inform LLS of any special requirement they may have to help them make a complaint.

Learner Feedback

LLS aims to routinely obtain learner feedback for all aspects of learning activities taking place, to advise and inform future delivery, and enable action to be taken where required if the learning experience does not meet the needs of the learners. See Learner Voice and Engagement Policy for more information.

Documents that will support this process:

POL010 LLS Learner Voice and Engagement Policy 2022-2023