



Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedure

aspiration

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LTD





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1. Introduction

Aspiration Training is committed to providing excellence in all aspects of our learning provision and services. However, it is recognised that sometimes things can go wrong. The views of our learners, employers and other stakeholders, whether positive or constructive, are an important part of learning, adapting and improving to provide a better service.

The Aspiration Training Complaints, Comments and Compliments procedure is not designed to apportion blame, but ensures that the company is able to continuously improve its services, levels of customer service and satisfaction. Aspiration Training ensures that there are sufficient platforms to facilitate complaints and that the process is easy to follow, fair and sensitive to both staff and the complainant.

All formal complaints will be centrally evaluated to inform continuous improvement of the organisation's undertakings.

2. Scope of Policy:

This policy applies to complaints, comments and compliments arising from any activities and services undertaken by Aspiration Training.

3. Impact on the Learner, Employers and Stakeholders:

The implementation of this policy will ensure that all learners are able to raise concerns related to their learning programmes in a safe environment.

4. Definitions

- A complaint is defined as a statement that something is perceived as unsatisfactory or unacceptable.
- A complaint may be informal or formal and may vary in nature and severity.

Complaints may be about:

- A failure to provide a service or an inadequate quality or standard of service
- A request for a service or for information which has not been actioned or answered
- Policies and procedures not being available or followed correctly
- Incorrect information being provided
- The quality and availability of facilities and learning resources
- Accessibility of buildings or services

- Staff or learner conduct
- Treatment by, or attitude of, a staff member or a learner

A complaint is not:

- A routine first time request for a service
- A request for information or an explanation of a policy or practice
- A disagreement with an assessment decision
- A claim for compensation from the provider
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or tribunal
- A request for information under the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts
- A grievance by a member of staff

A separate procedure for dealing with appeals against assessment decisions is in place, details of which can be found in the Learner Handbook or a hard copy can be made available upon request.

The Aspiration Training Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy is supported by further policies and procedures for matter of public interest and serious concerns:

- Aspiration Training Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Aspiration Training Whistleblowing Policy

5. Anonymous Complaints:

All feedback is valued and all complaints will be investigated and actioned as appropriate, including those made anonymously when possible, based on the information provided. Where insufficient information is provided such complaints will be recorded but marked as no further action to be taken.

6. Vexatious Complaints:

A complaint may be considered to be vexatious if it is deemed to have been made with the sole purpose of causing inconvenience, harassment or expense to the organisation. A vexatious complaint is an unjustified, inappropriate or improper use of formal procedure. For example a vexatious complaint may be:

- Where there is evidence which indicates that the complainant has a personal grudge and correspondence is targeted towards a particular member of staff.
- Where a complainant is unreasonably persistent in attempting to reopen an issue which has already concluded.
- Where a complainant is using abusive or aggressive language which is beyond the level of criticism that could be reasonably expected.

- If we believe we have received a vexatious complaint we reserve the right to review independently and outside the normal complaints procedure.

7. The Designated Complaints Officer (DCO):

The Aspiration Training Board of Directors will appoint an appropriate DCO on receipt of a complaint who will be responsible for the appropriate handling of any complaint assigned to them to investigate.

The DCO has a suitable level of authority to ensure that the correct complaints process is followed and to appoint an Investigating Officer.

The DCO will ensure that complaints are resolved as soon as possible in line with this policy.

The DCO may allow reasonable extension of timescales in exceptional circumstance to ensure full and fair investigation but must ensure the complainant is advised in writing should this be required.

The DCO will act with impartiality throughout the complaints process.

8. Procedure:

Complaints are not defined by the process through which they are reported but by the severity of their nature. Complaints can be made verbally in person, by phone, writing by email or letter or through our website. Complaints may be made in English or Welsh and will be treated equally.

8.1 Stage One – Informal Complaints (Non-serious, low risk, low profile):

Every effort is made to resolve a complaint as quickly and easily as possible. Depending on the severity of the complaint it may be possible to address the matter informally through discussion with a member or staff. Any member or staff will be happy to discuss any concerns and will take action accordingly. Anyone making a complaint should be made to feel comfortable in doing so, without fear that it may have an adverse impact on their learning or relationship with Aspiration Training, its member organisations or sub-contractors.

Whilst learners are encouraged to discuss any informal complaints with their Coach, should any learner feel unable to do so they will be supported to speak to an appropriate manager.

Stage One complaints not requiring investigation will be addressed within 15 working days.

8.2 Stage Two – Formal Complaints (More serious, high risk, high profile):

If it is felt that a complaint has not been addressed fully at stage one, or if the nature of the complaint is sufficiently serious it may be more appropriate to make a formal complaint in writing, support in doing so can be provided on request and complaints are welcome in English or Welsh.

A complaint which may be high risk or high profile could include:

- An allegation of corruption against an employee
- An allegation of fraud or other illegal activity
- A claim of dereliction of duty
- A potentially significant risk to the organisation's operations
- A claim of personal injury
- A claim of discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010
- An allegation of significant harm or abuse, or where there is a suspicion that someone may suffer significant harm
- A serious failure in service delivery such as major delays or repeated failures
- Significant and ongoing press interest

Upon receiving a complaint at this stage, the nature of the complaint and the complainant's anticipated outcome will be recorded in writing and the Aspiration Managing Director will allocate a DCO to investigate.

Investigation of the complaint will commence within one working day of receipt and the complaint will be acknowledged, in writing, within 5 working days by the appointed DCO.

The DCO will appoint an Investigating Officer (IO) who will record the details of the complaint on the Aspiration Training Complaints Record Form and undertake investigations as appropriate.

8.3 Stage 3 – Formal Complaints:

The complaint will be investigated and contact will be made with all relevant parties to gather information and supporting evidence. The IO will advise the complainant, DCO and the Aspiration Training Managing Director of progress at each stage.

8.4 Stage 4 – Formal Complaints:

Within 15 working days the complainant will receive written notification of the outcome of the complaint or details of any ongoing investigations as appropriate. The IO will also ensure the DCO and the Aspiration Training Managing Director are copied into the communication.

8.5 Stage 5 – Formal Complaints:

If it has been necessary for the investigation period to be extended beyond 15 working days, the complainant will receive written notification of the outcome within 6 weeks. This outcome will be the final decision unless the complainant chooses to appeal.

In order to learn from all complaints, even if it is something that can be addressed informally, the member of staff to whom the complaint was reported will complete the Aspiration Training Complaints Record to record the nature of the matter and how it has been resolved. This will be submitted for central evaluation to determine whether changes need to be made to prevent re-occurrence.

For analytical and evaluation purposes all formal complaints will be recorded and categorised.

Nature:

- Business Development
- Certificates
- Communication
- Equality of Opportunity
- Examinations
- Financial / Funding
- Health and Safety
- Registration Process
- Safeguarding
- Staff Conduct
- Support
- Teaching and Learning
- Other

Source:

- S. Stakeholder
- L. Learner
- E. Employer
- P. Parent/Carer

9. Appeals:

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they have the right to appeal. An appeal may be made on the grounds of the resulting decision or the improper application of process.

In the first instance, an appeal should be made, in writing, to the Aspiration Managing Director (England or Wales, as appropriate). If the Aspiration Managing Director or Chief Executive Officer are implicated in the complaint, the appeal should be made, in writing, to the Chair of the Aspiration Board of Directors.

If the complainant is unhappy with the appeal outcome, in the first instance they must contact the Designated Complaints Officer to clarify the rationale behind the decision. If the response remains unsatisfactory, the complainant can contact the relevant external agency below:

Wales

Head of the Provider Assurance
and Governance
Service (PAGS) Team
Ty Afon
Bedwas Road
Bedwas
Caerphilly
Wales CF83 8WT
Email: PAGS@gov.wales

England

Customer Service Team
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Email: complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

10. Responsibilities:

10.1 The Board of Directors:

- Ensuring Aspiration Training, its member organisations and sub-contractors fully meet associated legal requirements
- Ensuring this policy meets the requirements of relevant legislation and regulations
- Ensuring effective implementation and monitoring of this policy
- The Aspiration Training Managing Director will include summary information on complaint trends within the annual Self-Assessment Report

10.2 The Board of Operational Directors

- Ensuring that this policy is fully supported by their organisation
- Creating an open culture which values complaints as an opportunity to improve provision and services
- Supporting DCOs in undertaking actions as part of this policy
- Working with DCOs to understand complaint trends and themes and the identification of areas for improvement
- Monitoring the number and type of complaints and identifying and responding to any themes arising from complaints

10.3 The Designated Complaints Officer:

- Monitoring and reporting to the Aspiration Training Managing Director in relation to the nature of the complaint and actions taken
- Raising awareness of the complaints process across their organisation
- Ensuring that appropriate complaints records are maintained including the complaints log spreadsheet

10.4 Managers:

- Ensuring that both formal and informal complaints are effectively supported and recorded
- Ensuring that all employees are fully aware of this policy and procedure and have received suitable training
- Ensuring that formal and informal complaints are reported to the organisation's DCO

10.5 Staff:

- Ensuring that straightforward complaints are addressed appropriately and promptly where possible and reported/recorded
- Escalating complaints to an appropriate manager and/or the organisation's DCO
- Co-operating fully with the DCO and those investigating a complaint

11. Communication:

This policy is available bilingually on the Aspiration Training website and may be provided in large print on request.

Employers and learners will be provided with access to this procedure in electronic or hard copy formats at the start of the training programme. It will also be made available upon request.

12. Monitoring and Review Processes

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the organisation and its stakeholders. The review will be conducted by the Aspiration Training Board of Operational Directors.

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Overview of Aspiration Training Complaints Procedure

Stage One - Informal Complaint

Action and Timescale

Resolution by member of staff receiving complaint within 15 working days

Stage Two - Formal Complaint

Action and Timescale

Complaints Record completed and sent to Aspiration Training Managing Director with the timescale on receipt of complaint

MD to appoint Designated Complaints Officer (DCO) within 24 hours

DCO to ensure written acknowledgement of complaint to complainant within 5 working days

Stage Three - Formal Complaint

Action and Timescale

Appointment of an Investigation Officer, and the commencement of the investigation, to take place within one working day

Stage Four - Formal Complaint

Action and Timescale

Outcome of complaint to be sent in writing to Complainant and MD within 15 working days

Stage Five - Formal Complaint

Action Timescale

Complainant advised in writing of any extension to investigation timescales, including reasons for delays. Maximum time between complaint and outcome: 30 working days.

Appeals

Action and Timescale

Submission in writing, to the relevant Managing Director at Aspiration Training (England or Wales), following Aspiration Training following receipt of outcome within 15 working days

Appeal acknowledged in writing to Complainant within 5 working days

Outcome of appeal to be sent in writing to Complainant within 15 working days

13. Registering Comments and Compliments

Where learners and all other partners wish to register a compliment or comment, rather than make a complaint, they can do so either by email, through our website or writing to the details listed below in section 9 of this document. Any comments or compliments received verbally may be logged, together with those received by letter, will be forwarded to the Administration team

Compliments:

It is important that our learners and partners are happy with the service we provide and that we can learn from the things that go well. Any compliments you may wish to make about what we do or the staff who do it will be passed on to those concerned, or you may just wish to compliment Aspiration Training on a job well done.

Comments:

We welcome constructive comments and suggestions about what we do. Your ideas will be listened to and given careful consideration. A comment could relate to how any part of our service can improve.

14. Contact Details

If you would like to discuss this policy further, please contact:

Wales

Neil Tamplin
MD Aspiration Training, Wales
First Floor, Building Two,
Eastern Business Park,
St. Mellons, Cardiff. CF3 5EA
Email: ntamplin@aspirationtraining.com
Tel: 02921 175352

England

Mike Jones
MD Aspiration Training, England
Grosvenor House, Prospect Hill,
Redditch, B97 4DL
Email: mjones@aspirationtraining.com
Tel: 01527 359646