




Complaints Policy

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Authorised by: Ian Tarry 

In the capacity of: Director



COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Policy Statement

O.S.A.T Ltd strives to ensure that all Apprentices and learners have a successful and enjoyable experience. We are also committed to serving the wider business and local community.

We therefore, have a commitment to our Apprentices, Learners and stakeholders to ensure that any complaints they may have about our service are dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively. We also recognise that complaints can be used actively to improve our performance.

We make clear to complainants how to contact us when things go wrong and will ensure that we are sensitive to issues of confidentiality. We also set ourselves target timeframes to respond to complaints. Complaints are regularly analysed and reported on to Senior Managers

If there is a matter of concern an individual wishes to bring to the attention of the Centre, they need to follow the steps laid out in the 'Making a Complaint' section. If stages are missed out the Centre will refer their case back to the appropriate stage for investigation. The complaint should be raised with the relevant member of staff in the first instance.

Before using the complaints procedure, complainants are requested to talk directly about their dissatisfaction with the individual(s) involved, to see if an informal resolution is possible. Candidates should try to resolve issues with their tutors in the first instance. Most complaints can be resolved quickly by informal processes at the level of immediate contact. Only if these measures fail should the issue be raised as a complaint.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined as any specific concern about the centre, including provision of a programme of study or related academic or support service.

Who can make a complaint?

This policy is intended for use by O.S.A.T Ltd Apprentices, parents, employers, former Apprentices, staff, teachers/assessors, stakeholders or other people on work experience, visitors to the Centre.

What complaints have special procedures?

Apprentices who are dissatisfied with the outcomes of internal assessments should use the Candidate Assessment Appeals procedure, not the Complaints Procedure.

Applicants who wish to appeal an eligibility decision should use this policy.

Apprentices who feel they are subject to bullying or harassment should in the first instance follow the Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy.

Making a complaint

Stage 1 Local Level Resolution (informal complaint)

Complaints should be raised locally, either in writing or verbally, to the staff member directly responsible for the delivery of the service, or their line manager if the complaint relates to the conduct of a staff member.

A complainant should raise the matter informally within 15 working days of being aware of the issue with the member of staff concerned or that person's immediate supervisor or manager. Where the complaint relates to a series of events, then the concern should be raised within 15 working days of the last occurrence.

Centre candidates may seek assistance from an appropriate member of staff.

Informal resolution is taken very seriously by the Centre. Before moving to Formal Investigation, the Centre will look at the means by which an informal resolution was attempted.

For informal complaints relating to the Apprentices programme, the candidate should discuss the matter, in the first instance, with the Tutor or Team Leader, as appropriate.

For complaints relating to Centre services, the complainant should discuss the matter, in the first instance, with the person providing the service, or that member of staff's line manager or supervisor.

Stage 2 Formal Investigation

If a complaint has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at Stage 1, or it cannot be resolved informally, a Stage 2 complaint should be made. A complaints form, in addition to any supporting documentation must be submitted by the Complainant to Central Administration within 15 working days. The form should explain the specific concern about the provision of a programme of study or the service provided. This should include the following:

- the specific concern about the provision of a programme of study or the service provided.
- the informal approaches used and why they were not successful.
- Indicate the outcome sought. However, it is important to note the eventual outcome may be different from the one sought.

An acknowledgment will be sent within 5 working days and initiate the investigation and a member of the management team will be nominated to formally investigate. A full written response should be provided to the complainant within 10 working days of receipt. Should circumstances require additional time for the complaint investigation, the complaint investigator will advise the candidate and will agree a revised timeframe for the completion of the investigation.

The investigating manager must ensure the complainant has an adequate opportunity to be heard.

Centre Apprentices have the right to request support in the preparation of their complaint from the Centre's Candidate Support team or from the Candidate s' Union.

The Investigating manager must consider all such statements presented by, or on the specific written authorisation of the complainant.

Following the completion of the investigation, the Investigating Manager may uphold the complaint in full, in part, or dismiss it.

The Centre will implement any such recommendations arising out of the complaint investigation. In response to allegations of staff conduct, if an investigation determines that any disciplinary or remedial action is required, this will be conducted in consultation with Human Resources.

Stage 3 Appeal

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation at Stage 2 of the procedure, they can appeal against the decision and request a review of the complaint. An appeal must be submitted within 15 working days of the date of the Stage 2 outcome letter. Stage 3 constitutes a review and not a re-investigation of the complaint and can only be requested on the following grounds:

- There were procedural irregularities in the Stage 2 investigation which had a material effect on the outcome;
- Based on the evidence available to the Stage 2 investigator at the time, the outcome is unreasonable; and/or
- New evidence has come to light which the Complainant was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process and which would have had a material impact on the outcome.

The appeal will be reviewed by the Centre Manager, who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days. The Director will consider whether the complainant has demonstrated grounds for appeal in full or in part (and suggest any action to resolve the complaint), or not at all. If the complainant has not satisfied the grounds for review, they will be notified of this and issued with a Completion of Procedures letter within 15 working days.

Where the grounds for appeal have been met, a review will be initiated and a full response will be provided within 15 working days of receipt. Following the completion of the investigation, the Manager responsible may uphold the complaint in full, in part, or dismiss it.

Outcomes of complaint reviews concerning staff conduct will be copied to the relevant line manager. If any disciplinary action is required, this will be conducted in consultation with Human Resources.

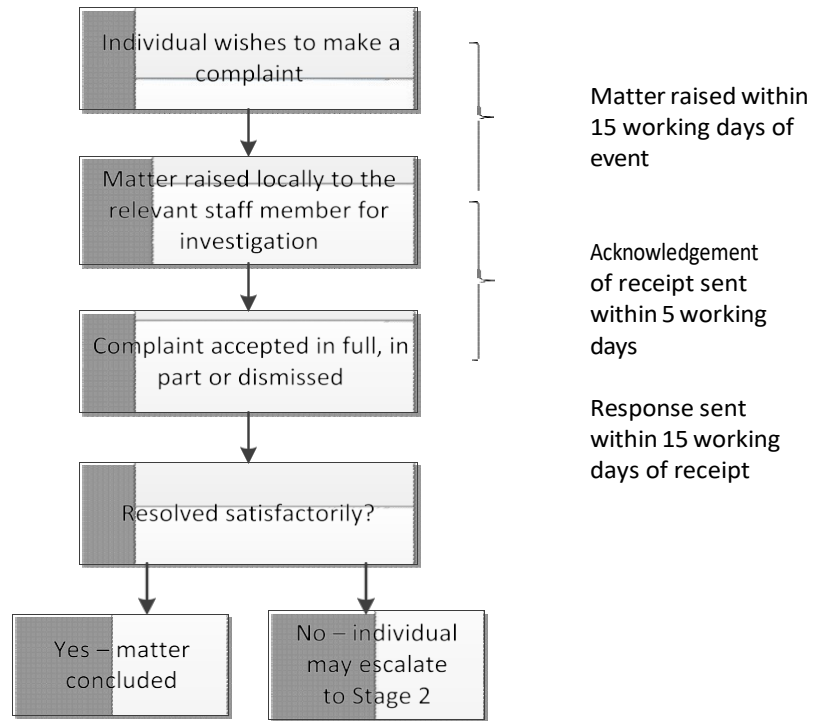
Finally, once the Centre complaints policy is exhausted and all three stages have been completed, there exists a right to complain to the appropriate statutory bodies. Details can be found in your induction folder on our website www.osatltd.co.uk/policies or contact enquiries@osatltd.co.uk

Reports

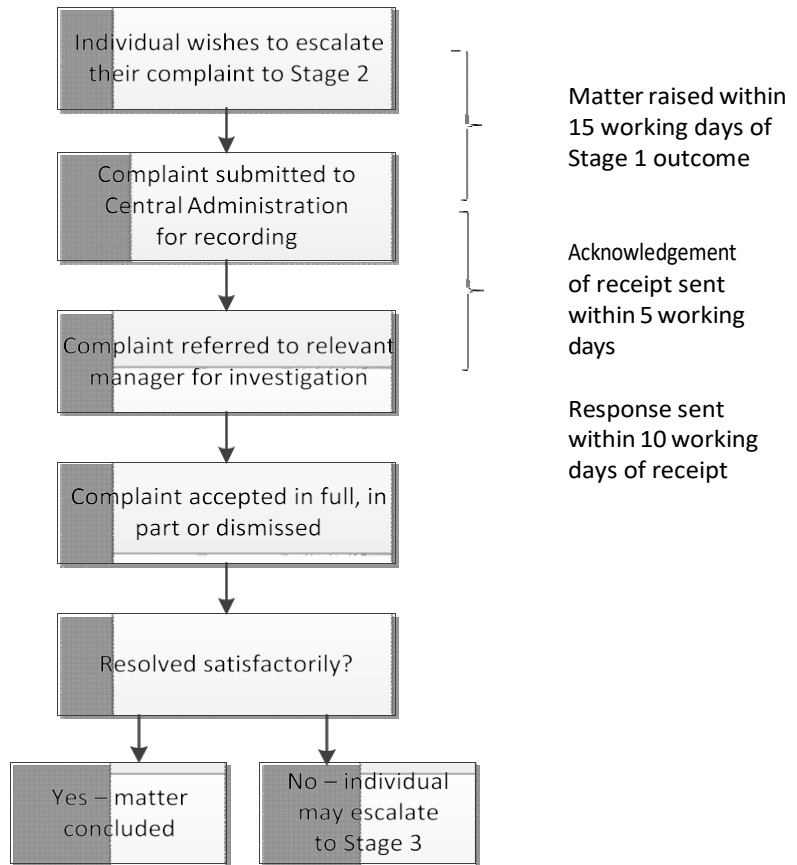
The Central Administrator will collate a summary report of Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments for consideration by the Centre Management Team on a quarterly basis. An annual report will be produced at the end of ESFA funding year. The report will compare year on year data, identify any significant trends and include a year-on-year analysis of complaints received from candidates by age, gender, ethnicity and disability.

APENDIX

**Stage 1 : Local Level
Resolution**



Stage 2: Formal investigation



Stage 3: Appeal

