



Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) Complaints & Appeals Policy

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Introduction

A complaint can be made about behaviour or actions carried out by: VIY; a member of staff employed by VIY; a subcontracted provider; an assessment organisation; a learner; or an associated employer, contractor or volunteer, which causes significant disadvantage. The aim of any complaint should be to stop the offending behaviour; to secure appropriate and fair redress; and to learn how things might be done better in future (to the extent that they can suggest ways to improve, complaints are not necessarily undesirable). Complaints concerning a subcontracted provider, an assessment organisation, an associated employer, volunteer or contractor can be taken up with the relevant organisation, following their complaints procedure, or through VIY using this procedure.

Informal complaints

The most satisfactory way to resolve a complaint is often by direct discussion between the person who feels aggrieved and the person who seems to have given offence. To be effective in achieving a resolution discussions should be:

- Calm, with no raised voices or inflammatory language
- Specific, with the grounds for complaint clearly stated
- Un-confrontational. It may be that the offence, whilst real, was unintentional and a simple apology would suffice to lay matters to rest
- Constructive, seeking ways to avoid future difficulties

An informal approach is most likely to work where the people concerned are of broadly equal status (for example, they are both learners) or they know each other well (for example, two mentors). The presence of a third person who is neutral in the dispute may help in its resolution. Where a complaint concerns a serious matter – violent bullying, racial abuse or discrimination by a member of staff against a learner, for example – it should always be dealt with formally.

Formal complaints

Even though the procedure is formal and may result in serious action against an offender if upheld, formal complaints will be dealt with in a sympathetic way, respecting the dignity of all concerned. The procedure for addressing a formal complaint is as follows:

- The complainant should either report the incident in writing or via an informal verbal discussion that are witnessed by a team member and manager (discussions with those under the age of 18 must comply with our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy)



- The complaint should be described in as much detail as possible and the complainant should agree that the information is correct, and the understanding of the complaint is noted
- The complaint will be given to the relevant manager (by ten working days of the alleged offence) and copied to a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member
- The complaint investigation will be actioned by the relevant manager within ten working days of the alleged offence, if further time is needed then the complainant will be notified
- A written judgement on the complaint will be sent to the complainant, copied to an SLT member
- The relevant manager/SLT will recommend any further action thought necessary related to the complaint

Appeals

If a person is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, or if the complaint cannot be resolved in a satisfactory manner, they have the right to appeal. Appeals must be made to the COO, or a designated member of SLT if the COO is involved.

The complainant must make it very clear, to the COO/SLT member, that they are appealing. The COO/SLT will fully review the appeal and respond in writing within ten working days of the appeal.