

Learner Complaints Policy W0004 / V9.0

This policy applies to Impact Futures Group and its trading brands, including but not limited to Impact Futures, The Childcare Company, and First Response First Aid (FRFA), hereafter collectively referred to in this document as “the Group” or “we/us/our”. Where a policy is not applicable to all brands or entities, this will be clearly stated within the document.

1. Policy Statement (Introduction & Ethos)

- 1.1. At The Childcare Company/Impact Futures, we strive to provide the best possible service a learner, applicant or employer can expect, including but not exclusively high-quality training. However, we recognise that sometimes things may go wrong. If for any reason you are dissatisfied with the service that we provide, please let us know so we can deal with your concern and, where appropriate, ensure improvements are made as part of our ethos and commitment to continuous improvement. We encourage you to make a phone call so that we can talk about your problem and resolve it swiftly.

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1. We aim to make this policy and procedure easy to understand and use.
- 2.2. We aim to make this policy and procedure easy to access.
- 2.3. We treat all complaints seriously and aim to use our findings as part of our continuous improvement process.
- 2.4. We will provide additional support to anyone wishing to make a complaint that has a learning difficulty or disability, or a physical disability that means additional support is required.

3. What is a Complaint?

- 3.1. A complaint is when you inform us you are not happy about the service we provide. It can be about anything, can be relatively minor or something more serious and could include:
 - 3.1.1. when we do not deliver a service on time.
 - 3.1.2. when we give you incorrect information.
 - 3.1.3. when you receive a poor-quality service.
 - 3.1.4. when you have a concern with a member of our staff.
 - 3.1.5. when you think you have been discriminated against (Equality Act 2010 – 9 protected characteristics – refer to section 7 Appendix 2).

- 3.2. If you have concerns about assessment and quality assurance decisions, please refer to QU001 Learner Appeals Policy and Procedures, rather than use the complaints policy and procedures.

4. Our Commitment

- 4.1. Making a complaint should be as easy as possible.
- 4.2. We treat your complaint seriously and with the utmost professionalism.
- 4.3. We deal with your complaint promptly and in accordance with our confidentiality policy.
- 4.4. We learn from complaints and use them to review and improve our service.
- 4.5. If a complaint is received, it will be dealt with efficiently, with the aim of resolving the issue as quickly as possible, to the satisfaction of the customer.
- 4.6. Confidentiality: Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure all parties maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to you.
- 4.7. If we receive a complaint, we will try, wherever possible, to resolve it immediately and notify you of the outcome. We will send:
- 4.7.1. acknowledgement within one working day, including the details of who will be dealing with the complaint.
- 4.7.2. a final response within five working days.
- 4.8. If we are unable to resolve the complaint within ten working days, we may ask for any further information. Moreover, we will keep you updated as to likely timescales where any additional investigation time will be needed.
- 4.9. We record all complaints and review them at our Senior Leadership Team meetings to consider if we need to make any changes to improve our services to prevent a re-occurrence.
- 4.10. An annual review of complaints and resolutions is conducted, and the associated report is reviewed by the Board.
- 4.11. If for any reason you are unhappy with our response to your complaint, you can escalate your complaint to our Operations Director.

5. Procedures

5.1. Stage 1 – Informal

5.1.1. A learner, applicant or employer who has a complaint, can raise the matter with any The Childcare Company/Impact Futures staff member and we encourage you to speak to your usual point of contact in the first instance, as sometimes issues can be resolved swiftly and locally without commencing with the complaint's procedure.

5.1.2. An informal approach is appropriate in some cases; these complaints will be responded to by the appropriate person within five working days of receipt of the complaint.

5.1.3. If the problem is not resolved satisfactorily at this stage, complainants should raise the matter on the Client Feedback Form

5.1.4. You may also feedback in writing to;
Customer Experience
The Childcare Company/Impact Futures
The Porter Building
Office 221
2nd Floor
1 Brunel Way
Slough, SL1 1FQ

5.1.5. The Complaint will be acknowledged within one working day and investigated. We will aim to resolve your complaint within five working days. If a further period of investigation is required, we will let you know. If you are unsatisfied with the outcome, you can escalate the complaint by moving to stage 2 of the complaints process.

5.2. Stage 2 -Formal

The Childcare Company/Impact Futures recognises that informal mechanisms may not resolve all problems and that some problems may be too serious or sensitive to be dealt with by raising the issue directly with the member of staff involved. In these circumstances, the formal complaints procedure should be used.

5.2.1. A formal complaint should be submitted on the Client Feedback Form

5.2.2. The statement of complaint should be as thorough and complete as possible and include any supporting documentation.

5.2.3. The Business Services Team will review the complaint within 24 hours and the complainant will receive an acknowledgment of the submitted complaint.

5.2.4. The complaint will be passed on to the most appropriate person to deal with the complaint and they will become the 'complaint owner' (in most cases this will be the Senior Leadership Member most appropriate). It is the complaint owner's responsibility to fully investigate the complaint within five working days of this being received.

5.2.5. The complaint owner will document their findings on the complaint ticket with the agreed outcome

5.2.6. The complaint owner will update the complainant of the outcome of their complaint in writing.

5.2.7. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response received as a result of Stage 2, the complaint may be taken to Stage 3 of the procedure.

5.3. Stage 3 – Appeal

- 5.3.1. If the complaint is escalated to Stage 3, this should be indicated on the original complaint ticket and an automated email will be sent to the Board of Directors immediately. The Board of Directors will hear the complaint and review the evidence. The Board of Directors will investigate the complaint, including all documentary evidence.
- 5.3.2. The Board of Directors may seek to resolve the complaint based on the documentary evidence alone.
- 5.3.3. Following the investigation, a written response will be produced detailing whether the complaint is upheld or not and detailing action(s) necessary to resolve the issue.
- 5.3.4. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.
- 5.3.5. If you remain dissatisfied, and the internal complaints procedure has been exhausted, you will be given the details of the relevant external organisation to escalate your complaint to. A list with links can be found in section 6 appendix 1.
- 5.3.6. If you have concerns about assessment and quality assurance decisions, please refer to QU001 Learner Appeals Policy and Procedures, rather than use the complaints policy and procedures.

5.4. Stage 4

Review: one month after your complaint has been resolved, we will contact you to check that you are still satisfied with the outcome and that the issue has not reoccurred.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1. All complaints will be treated seriously, handled sensitively and with due consideration to all parties involved. In line with our equal opportunities policy, all complainants will be treated fairly and will not suffer any recrimination or disadvantage as a result of making a complaint. Any person named in a complaint, however, will be informed and have a right of reply as part of the investigation process.
- 6.2. Complaints must be made by complainants themselves, however, we recognise that some apprentices and vulnerable adults may have difficulties with this and so encourage them to use whatever assistance is required from a third party to make their complaint effectively.

7. Recording a Complaint

Complaints received are automatically logged onto a central complaints log. The reason for the complaint and all progress made during the life of a complaint is recorded on the log until it is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant or to a point at which The Childcare Company/Impact Futures can reasonably be expected to do no more.

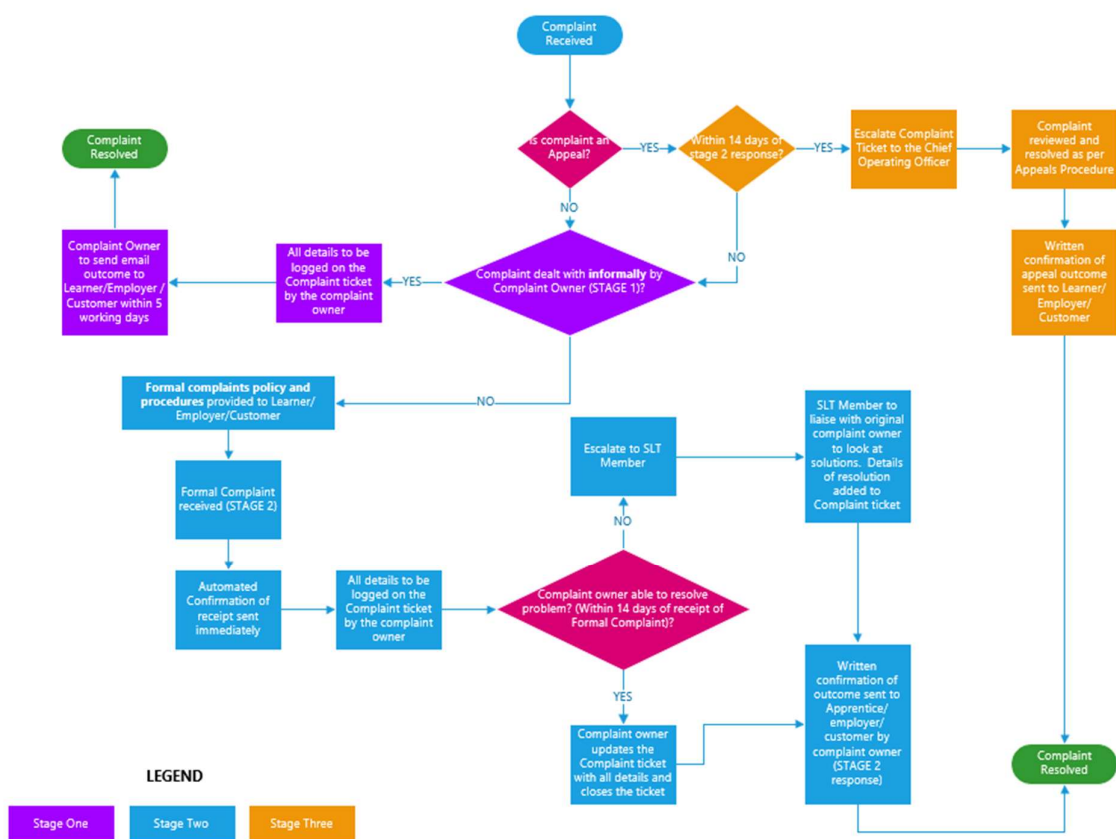
8. Governance

The central complaints log is reviewed each month by the Senior Leadership Team to understand key themes or trends that could inform future business processes and ways of working.

9. Complaints Threshold

| Complaint Tier | Risk Threshold | Outcome |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Tier 4: Formal Complaint | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malpractice Concern regarding development coach behaviour Poor communication Meetings unattended and no reason given Previous concern was unresolved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow formal complaints procedure Senior Management are notified Reported to Board of Directors Complaint recorded for audit activity |
| Tier 3: Informal Complaint | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern regarding development coach changes Learner is significantly behind on programme Development coach has been unhelpful Delivery and/or experience is poor Learner feels unsupported in the workplace Previous concern was unresolved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow informal complaints procedure Senior Management are notified Complaint recorded for audit activity |
| Tier 2: Concern | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work submitted hasn't been marked Lack of development coach contact Failed functional skills exam Learner's inclusion need is not being met Learner's development coach has left Learner has no development coach aligned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Operational Performance Manager to be contacted in the first instance to resolve. Operations Director notified |
| Tier 1: Localised Issue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner has login/access issues Learner is on the wrong programme Learner does not want to complete programme Learner has not received their certificate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner's Development Coach to be contacted in the first instance Regional Operational Performance Manager to be notified |

Complaints Procedure



Appendix 1 – Further Information – Relevant Links

| Organisation Name | Website Link |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Education & Skills Funding Agency | https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure |
| OFSTED | https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints |
| Ofqual | Complaints procedure - Ofqual - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) |

Appendix 2 – The Equality Act 2010 – 9 Protected Characteristics

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

THE 9 PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS **Definitions of the 9 Protected Characteristics**

EQUALITY DIVERSITY INCLUSION

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 age 1 | 2 disability 2 | 3 gender reassignment 3 | Age: A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32- year-olds) or range of ages (for example 18- to 30-year-olds). |
| 4 marriage and civil partnership 4 | 5 pregnancy and maternity 5 | 6 race 6 | Disability: A person has a disability if she or he has physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. |
| 7 religion or belief 7 | 8 sex 8 | 9 sexual orientation 9 | Gender Reassignment: The process of transitioning from one gender to another. |

Marriage and Civil Partnership:
 Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also be recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race:

Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion or Belief:

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. A belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex:

A man or a woman.

Sexual Orientation:

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex or a different sex. LGBT+ is an "inclusive" way to represent all the different identities in the longer acronym.

Document control

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Signed:



Print Name: MICHELLE MASON

Job Title: Project Manager