

Policy:	Complaints Policy
Version:	7
Last reviewed date:	w/c 01 st April 2024
Effective from:	1 st April 2024
Next review date:	1 st April 2025
Signed:	 Samantha Bell (Director)

Complaints Policy

Summary

This policy is Education For Dentals commitment to complaints procedures in its application. The policy is reviewed annually to ensure content is meeting regulatory requirements and our own internal quality standards, and for staff understanding, adherence and commitment to the principles and application of the policy in everyday working practices.

Introduction

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that any organisation or individual with whom Education For Dental is associated with, (e.g. Learners, employers, stakeholders) who has cause for complaint regarding any aspect of their interaction with our business, has freely available access to the process and can expect a truthful, full, and complete response, and an apology where appropriate.

Complainants have the right not to be discriminated against as the result of making a complaint, to experience a fair and unbiased complaint process and to have the outcome fully explained to them. All Education for Dental staff is expected to be familiar with the procedures stated in this document, and to always keep in mind that everything they do and say may present a poor impression of the company and may prompt a complaint or even legal action.

The general principle of the company in respect of all complaints will be to regard it first and foremost as a learning process. However, in appropriate cases and after full and proper investigation the issue

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may form the basis of a separate disciplinary action. In the case of any complaint with implications for professional negligence or legal action, the appropriate defence organisation must be informed immediately.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.

Procedure

Who can a formal complaint be made to?

- Education For Dental
- Awarding Body

Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by or, with consent, on behalf of a learner (i.e. as a representative); a former learner who is receiving or has received education with the company; or someone who may be affected by any decision, act or omission of the company such as an employer.

Raising a complaint

If you are unhappy with the service provided by Education for Dental, or any aspect of your interactions with us, please contact us as soon as possible stating the nature of your complaint. Complaints can be made verbally, or in writing using the contact details below.

Who is responsible for dealing with complaints?

The Company's "Responsible Person" is Samantha Bell. They are charged with ensuring complaints are handled in accordance with the regulations, that lessons learned are fully implemented, and that no Complainant is discriminated against for making a complaint.

Contact details:

T: 07757078881

E: admin.educationfordental.com

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Address:

Castlemill
Dudley
DY4 7UF

Time limits for making complaints

The period for making a complaint is normally:

- (a) 12 months from the date on which the event which is the subject of the complaint occurred; or
- (b) 12 months from the date on which the event which is the subject of the complaint comes to the complainant's notice.

The company has discretion to extend these limits if there is good reason to do so and it is still possible to carry out a proper investigation. The collection or recollection of evidence, clinical guidelines or other resources relating to the time when the complaint event arose may also be difficult to establish or obtain. These factors may be considered as suitable reasons for declining a time limit extension, however that decision should be able to stand up to scrutiny.

Action upon receipt of a complaint

A) Verbal Complaints:

It is always better to try and deal with the complaint at the earliest opportunity and often it can be concluded at that point. A simple explanation and apology by staff at the time may be all that is required

A verbal complaint need not be responded to in writing for the purposes of the Regulations if it is dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant by the end of the next working day, neither does it need to be included in the annual Complaints Return. The company will however record them for the purposes of monitoring trends. Verbal complaints not formally recorded will be discussed when trends or issues need to be addressed and at least annually, with minutes of those discussions kept.

If resolution is not possible, details of the verbal complaint will be set out in writing and the learner provided with a copy within three working days. This ensures that each side is well aware of the issues for resolution. The process followed will be the same as for written complaints.

B) Written Complaints:

On receipt, an acknowledgement will be sent within **three** working days which offers the opportunity for a discussion (face-to-face or by telephone) on the matter. This is the opportunity to gain an indication of the outcome the complainant expects and also for the details of the complaint to be clarified. In the event that this is not practical or appropriate, the initial response should give some indication of the anticipated timescale for investigations to be concluded and an indication of when the outcome can be expected.

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If it is not possible to conclude any investigations within the advised timescale, then the complainant must be updated with progress and revised time scales on a regular basis. In most cases these should be completed within six months unless all parties agree to an extension.

The Investigation

Education For Dental will ensure that the complaint is investigated in a manner that is appropriate to resolve it speedily and effectively and proportionate to the degree of seriousness that is involved.

The investigations will be recorded in a complaints file created specifically for each incident and where appropriate should include evidence collected as individual explanations or accounts taken in writing.

Final Response

This will be provided to the complainant in writing (or email by mutual consent) and the letter will be signed by the Responsible Person. The letter will include:

An apology if appropriate (The Compensation Act 2006, Section 2 expressly allows an apology to be made without any admission of negligence or breach of a statutory duty)

A clear statement of the issues, details of the investigations and the findings, and clear evidence-based reasons for decisions if appropriate

Where errors have occurred, explain these fully and state what has been or will be done to put these right or prevent repetition.

A clear statement that the response is the final one and the company is satisfied it has done all it can to resolve the matter at local level

A statement of the right, if they are not satisfied with the response, to refer the complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP or visit the '[Making a complaint page](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint)' at <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint> (to complain online or download a paper form).

Alternatively the complainant may call the PHSO Customer Helpline on 0345 015 4033 from 8:30am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday or send a text to their 'call back' service: 07624 813 005

The final letter should not include:

Any discussion or offer of compensation without the express involvement and agreement of the relevant defence organisation(s)

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Government Funded Provision

If after following the above procedure an individual on an ESFA programme (including an apprenticeship) believes that their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, they may raise their concerns directly with the ESFA at complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

Alternatively, you may write to:
Customer Service Team,
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Annual Review of Complaints

Education For Dental will produce an annual complaints report

The report will include:

- Statistics on the number of complaints received
- The number considered to have been upheld
- Known referrals to the Ombudsman
- A summary of the issues giving rise to the complaints
- Learning points that came out of the complaints and the changes to procedure, policies or care which have resulted

Care must be taken to ensure that the report does not inadvertently disclose any confidential data or lead to the identity of any person becoming known.

Confidentiality

All complaints must be treated in the strictest confidence and Education For Dental will ensure that the learner is made aware of any confidential information to be disclosed to a third party

Education For Dental will keep a record of all complaints and copies of all correspondence relating to complaints, such records will be kept separate from all other records and no reference which might disclose the fact a complaint has been made should be included on the electronic portfolio system.

Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

Where a complainant becomes unreasonable or excessively rude or aggressive in their promotion of the complaint, some or all of the following formal provisions will apply and must be communicated to the learner by the Responsible Person in writing:

- The complaint will be managed by one named individual at senior level who will be the only contact for the learner
- Contact will be limited to one method only (e.g. in writing)

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- Place a time limit on each contact
- The number of contacts in a time period will be restricted
- A witness will be present for all contacts
- Repeated complaints about the same issue will be refused unless additional material is being brought forward
- Only acknowledge correspondence regarding a closed matter, not respond to it
- Set behaviour standards
- Return irrelevant documentation
- Detailed records will be kept of each encounter