

Complaints Policy



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1 Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the process for handling complaints regarding the services provided by the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC). It aims to ensure that complaints are addressed fairly, consistently, and in a timely manner, in line with CEC's commitment to continuous improvement and transparency.

This policy applies to complaints received from all stakeholders, including schools, employers, parents, learners, and members of the public.

2 Principles

CEC is committed to:

- Treating all complaints seriously
- Investigating complaints objectively and impartially
- Providing clear and timely communication throughout the complaints process
- Ensuring the complaints process is accessible, transparent, and easy to understand
- Protecting complainants from any form of retaliation or unfair treatment as a result of lodging a complaint
- Using the insights gained from complaints to improve the quality of services and prevent recurrence of issues.

3 Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided by CEC, whether related to service delivery, staff conduct, communication, or any other matter.

Complaints may range from minor concerns to more serious grievances that require formal investigation.

4 Complaints Process

4.1 Informal Resolution

In the first instance, complainants should raise concerns informally with the relevant staff member. Many issues can be resolved quickly through direct communication. This stage provides an opportunity for the staff member to correct the matter without need to invoke the formal complaints process.

Where a complaint relates to serious misconduct by a member of staff, the complaint should be referred directly to the Complaints Officer.

4.2 Formal Complaints

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response provided by the relevant staff member, they may submit a formal complaint.

How to Submit a Formal Complaint: Complaints should be submitted in writing, either by email or letter, to:

- **Complaints Officer:** Claire Stevenson, Head of Compliance
- **Email:** dpo@careersandenterprise.co.uk
- **Mail:** The Careers and Enterprise Company, 120 Aldersgate St, London EC1A 4JQ.

The complaint should include:

- The complainant's name and contact details
- A clear description of the issue or concern
- The desired outcome
- Any relevant supporting documents or evidence

4.4 Acknowledgment

All formal complaints will be acknowledged in writing within five working days of receipt. The acknowledgment will:

- Confirm that the complaint has been received
- Provide a reference number for the complaint
- Explain the next steps in the process and expected timeframes.

4.5 Investigation

The Complaints Officer will conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the complaint, working with a relevant member of CEC's Extended Leadership Team where appropriate. This may involve:

- Interviewing staff and/ or other relevant parties
- Reviewing records and documents
- Gathering additional information as necessary.

4.6 Response

A formal written response will be provided to the complainant within one month of the complaint being received. The response will:

- Summarise the investigation process
- Address the issues raised in the complaint
- Outline any actions taken to resolve the issue
- Provide information on the right to appeal, if applicable.

If the investigation is complex and additional time is needed, the complainant will be notified, and an updated timeframe for response will be provided.

5 Appeals Process

An appeal may be submitted on any of the following grounds:

- i. The handling of the complaint substantially failed to comply with this Complaints Policy
- ii. Significant new evidence has become available which was not reasonably accessible to the complainant before their receipt of the formal written response to their complaint
- iii. The findings of the Complaints Officer would be considered manifestly unreasonable by a reasonable, neutral person.

Appeals which relate only to a complainant's dissatisfaction with the outcome of the complaint will not be heard.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Complaints Officer within ten working days of receiving the outcome.

Appeals will be heard by a member of CEC's Senior Leadership Team, Board or an appropriate independent person. A person who hears an appeal will not have been involved in the original complaint in any material way.

The appeal decision will be final, and the complainant will receive a written response within one calendar month.

6 Timeframes

CEC aims to address complaints in a timely fashion. Timeframes for each stage of the process are as follows:

- Acknowledgment of a formal complaint: five working days
- Investigation and written response to a formal complaint: one month
- Acknowledgment of an appeal: five working days
- Review and written response to an appeal: one month

Where more time is necessary at any stage due to either the complexity of a complaint, the availability of relevant staff members, or a requirement for more information, the complainant will be informed and provided with a revised timeframe.

7 Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled confidentially. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in the investigation and resolution of the complaint.

CEC will comply with data protection law when handling complaints. Personal information will be used for the purposes of investigating and resolving the complaint and for CEC's related legal purposes and will be stored securely. More information about how CEC processes personal data and your data rights can be found in our Privacy Notice at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/cec-privacy-notice-cookies/>

8 Monitoring and Review

CEC will regularly monitor complaints to identify any trends or areas for improvement. An annual report summarising complaints received, actions taken, and lessons learned will be submitted to the Board of Directors.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose and in line with best practice.

9 Contact Information

For any queries related to this Complaints Policy, please contact:

- **Complaints Officer:** Claire Stevenson, Head of Compliance
- **Email:** dpo@careersandenterprise.co.uk
- **Mail:** The Careers and Enterprise Company, 120 Aldersgate St, London EC1A 4JQ.

10 Additional Information

This policy is available to all stakeholders and can be accessed on our website via:

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/>

The Careers & Enterprise Company

careersandenterprise.co.uk

