

LEARNER COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

A complaint can be made about behaviour or actions carried out by a member of the staff of Gloucestershire Engineering Training (GET), or a learner, or an associated employer which causes significant disadvantage. Sometimes a complaint is called a grievance; the two terms mean essentially the same thing. 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.

Responsibility

The CEO has overall responsibility to ensure the procedure is followed. Day to day management of the procedure rests with the Quality Coordinator overseen by Learner Services Team Leader.

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 discussion should be:

Calm, with no raised voices or inflammatory language

Specific, with the grounds for complaint clearly stated and referring to the appropriate policy wherever possible

Non-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 either learners or an employer and provider staff, or they know each other well or they are learner and tutor). The presence of a third person who is neutral in the dispute may help in its resolution. Where a complaint concerns a serious matter – for example, violence, bullying, racial abuse or discrimination by a member of staff against a learner, 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

1. A complaints form is obtained by the complainant from the Quality Coordinator quality@get-trained.org
2. The complaint should be described in as much detail as possible, referring where possible to specific Gloucestershire Engineering Training policies.
3. If a complaint is made by a learner, a member of staff may fill in the form on their behalf. The role of the member of staff is strictly limited to setting down the complaint clearly and does not extend to offering advice or judgement.
4. The complainant must read the Complaint Form thoroughly and sign it as an accurate record of their concerns.
5. The complaint form is submitted to a designated safeguarding officer who will log the complaint, keeping a copy of the form; determine whether or not the complaint should be dealt with through the Safeguarding procedure; or allocate the complaint to the appropriate person for resolution.

The appropriate person may be:

- A member of the senior management team where the complaint involves 2 learners or a learner and a member of staff
 - The chief executive, where a manager is involved
 - A designated member of the board where the chief executive is involved
6. A complaint form should be submitted to the safeguarding officer within 10 working days of the alleged offence, where the subject of the complaint was a single event or an event which culminated a series of contributory matters.
 7. The complaint will normally be heard within 10 working days of receipt of the complaints form.
 8. Complainants have a right to present their concerns in person, accompanied by a representative if they wish.
 9. The person about whom the complaint is made has the right to respond, accompanied by a representative if they wish.
 10. The representative of Gloucestershire Engineering Training who hears the complaint may call other witnesses to help clarify matters; the complainant has a right to be present during these witness statements.
 11. The representative of Gloucestershire Engineering Training will produce a written judgement on the complaint within 10 working days of the final hearing, which will be sent to the complainant and the person about whom the complaint was made and to the designated safeguarding officer who will keep a record.
 12. The representative of Gloucestershire Engineering Training will recommend any further action thought necessary related to the complaint including, where appropriate, reference to an apprentice's employer.
 13. Gloucestershire Engineering Training's Quality Coordinator will analyse all complaints, seeking any patterns, and prepare an annual report and recommendations for senior managers and the Board.
 14. If the complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant at the first hearing, an appeal may be made to the CEO or, where the CEO is involved, the Board. The decision of the Board is final.

Documents

Complaints Form.

Linked Policies and Procedures

1. Discipline
2. Safeguarding
3. Learner Handbook
4. Use of Information Technology