

Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

Commitment

ACT are committed to delivering world class learning experiences, and to utilising feedback provided from the submission of complaints and compliments to support us to continuously improve the products and services that are provided to learners and other stakeholders.

ACT acknowledge a complaint as any statement of dissatisfaction, and in the event of stakeholder dissatisfaction the Complaints Policy and Procedure should be followed.

ACT endeavour to maintain high standards of all its activities and customer service through continuous improvement and so all complaints, compliments and comments will be evaluated and reviewed centrally and regularly.

Purpose

This procedure operates in conjunction with the separate CAVC Group Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy.

This procedure aims to ensure that all complaints, compliments and comments are managed and processed in the most appropriate manner, and following a set procedure, and ensure that where required, appropriate action is taken following submission of stakeholder feedback.

This procedure outlines methods how stakeholders can submit feedback on their experiences with ACT, key timescales that we aim to follow, and the process for appeal against the outcome of any investigation completed by us. All complaints will be treated with the utmost respect, sensitivity and discretion within specific timescales.

Scope

This procedure applies to all types of feedback, including compliments, comments and complaints - whether formal or informal. This procedure applies to all ACT/Partner activities and services regardless of type or location. ACT recognise and acknowledge complaints may vary in type and severity (minor, severe and very severe) and may be in relation to a wide range of activities.

These could include:

- Learners
- Any person(s) associated with the teaching received and welfare of the learner whilst at ACT such as, but not limited to, Parents, Guardians, Carers, Social Workers, Probation Officers, Careers Officers, Teachers (for 14-16 provision)
- Stakeholders such as, but not limited to, Employers, Referral Services, Schools, Referred To services
- Local Community individuals or bodies
- Subcontractors/Partners

Please note:

- Learners who are not satisfied with assessment decisions should follow the Learners' Appeals Procedure.
- Parents and guardians can make a complaint on behalf of a learner under the age of 18, or who is a vulnerable adult. No investigation of a complaint made on behalf of a learner will be undertaken without that learner's written agreement to the concerns raised and written consent for an investigation to be carried out.
- Where a complaint involves allegations of criminal conduct, ACT will consider whether it would be more appropriate to suspend its internal procedures for dealing with that complaint, pending the outcome of any police investigation.
- Complaints that are deemed to be of a serious nature may go straight to Stage 2 (Formal Complaint). The final decision on this rests with the Head of Continuous Improvement. Examples of a serious complaint are outlined in Appendix A.
- No learner bringing a complaint under these Procedures, whether successfully or otherwise, will be treated less favourably by any member of staff moving forwards after the complaint has been closed.
- For practical reasons, normally no action will be taken in the event of a complaint being made anonymously. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances where ACT deems it appropriate to take action or investigate a matter on the basis of an anonymous complaint e.g. relating to Safeguarding. Any decision to do so must be agreed by the Head of Continuous Improvement.

Responsibilities

The Head of 11-16 Education, Head of Continuous Improvement, and Delivery Director have overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation.

The Head of Continuous Improvement is responsible for:

- Overall responsibility for this Policy/Procedure lies
- Investigation of any/all complaints which relates to, or affects the Safeguarding or Health and Safety of any stakeholder. The Head of Continuous Improvement will ensure that the Lead Safeguarding Officer/Health and Safety Manager are made immediately aware of the situation.
- Monitoring and analysis of information that relates to complaints across the ACT Network, using data to identify common themes/trends across individual provide
- Working closely with the Head of 11-16 Education in relation to any/all complaints made in relation to the ACT Schools provision

The Head of 11-16 Education is responsible for:

- Monitored complaints in relation to the ACT Schools provision, to include keeping records of all related and relevant conversations and discussions for the purpose of future reference and review by the full governing body. These records will be kept for a minimum of seven years.
- Working with the Head of Continuous Improvement to record and investigate complaints relating to ACT Schools, to include follow up of any/all suggested actions

Partner Managers are responsible for:

- Reviewing partner monthly submission documents to identify complaints across partner providers
- Notifying the Head of Continuous Improvement of any complaints so they can be included on the ACT complaints log

- Working with Partner Quality contacts to review the investigation that has been completed into any/all complaints, to:
 - Review the background to the complaint
 - Review the investigation process
 - Review the outcomes of the complaint
 - Ensure that appropriate action is taken (where required) following a complaint

Communication and Storage

This will be communicated through all first line managers and to staff, as appropriate.

This is stored on IRIS HR.

Procedure

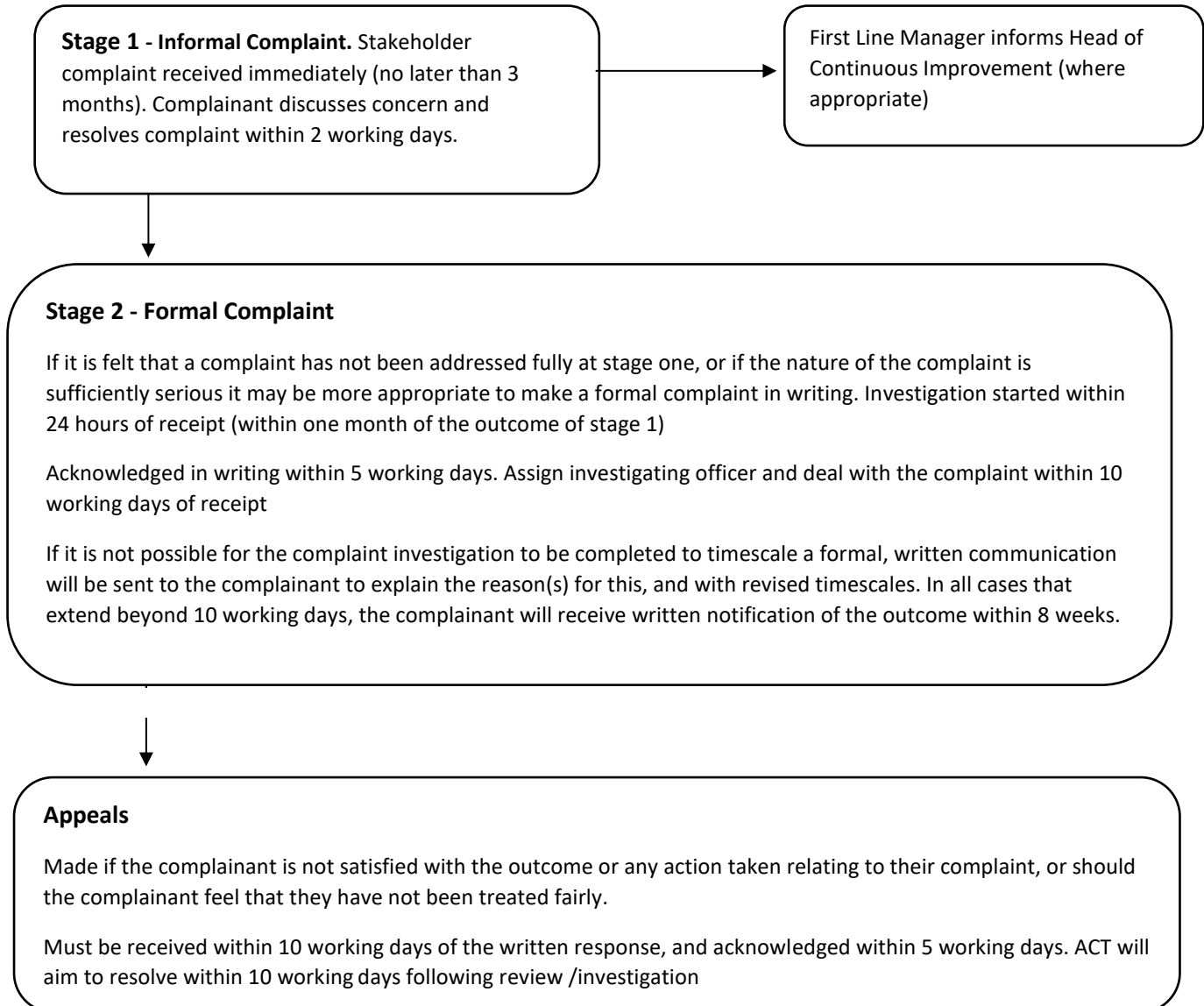
Flow charts of the process for Complaints, Compliments and Comments are included below.

See Annex 1 for detailed procedures – Apprenticeships and Traineeships

See Annex 2 for procedures in relation to complaints relating to members of staff.

Complaints process

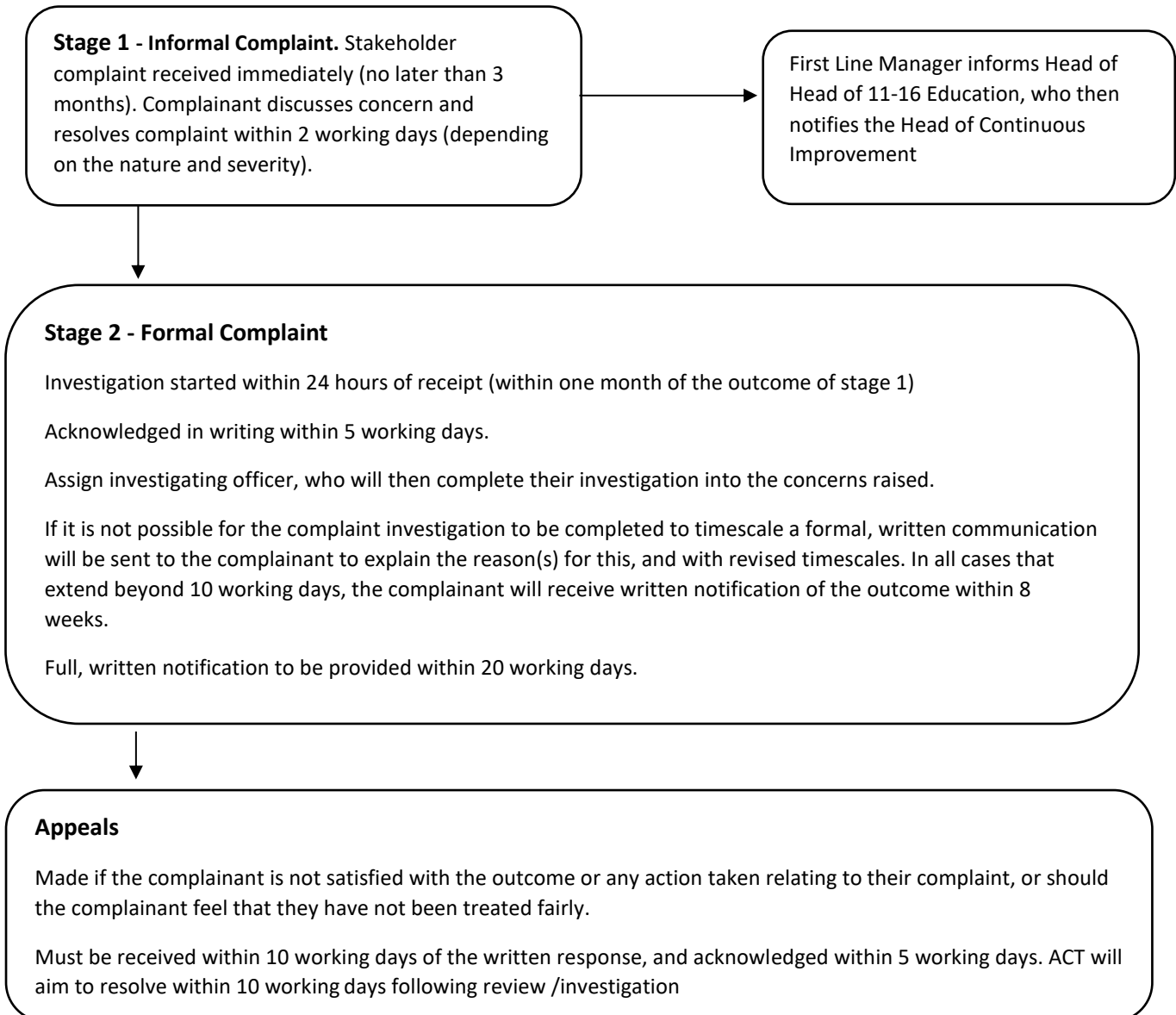
(ACT Apprenticeship and Traineeship provision)



Please note: Regular updates of new, closed and ongoing complaints are provided to the Director of Operations and Delivery. Monthly reports are provided to Senior Management Team.

Complaints process

(ACT Schools provision)



Please note: Regular updates of new, closed and ongoing complaints are provided to Senior Management Team and the Directorate.

Document / Policy Change Request

Changes to this policy and procedure will be dealt with by the Head of Continuous Improvement

Document / Policy Reviewing and Approving

This will be reviewed annually.

References

CAVC Group Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy.

Annex 1 – Detailed procedure

Stage 1 Informal

(Complaints can be made verbally in person or by phone; in writing by email or letter)

Depending on the nature and severity of the complaint it is advised at this stage for the matter to be addressed informally through discussion with a member of ACT staff who is most involved prior to making a formal complaint with the aim to agree an informal resolution within 2 working days. If this is not appropriate with this person, any member of staff including the management team are available.

The member of staff is responsible for informing their line manager, and to log the informal complaint on the informal Complaints Log. It is the responsibility of all subsequently involved parties to record further activity and actions on the informal Complaints Log. Only if these measures fail to reach a satisfactory conclusion should you move to Stage 2 and register a formal complaint.

Stage 2 Formal Complaints

(Complaints at this stage should be submitted via letter or email)

If it is felt that a complaint has not been addressed fully at stage one, or if the nature of the complaint is sufficiently serious it may be more appropriate to make a formal complaint in writing. Support in doing so can be provided on request and complaints are welcome in Welsh and English.

Complaints submitted by letter should be sent to the Head of Continuous Improvement, ACT Training, Ocean Park House, E Tyndall St, Cardiff CF24 5ET

Complaints submitted by email should be sent to feedback@acttraining.org.uk

Investigation of the complaint will commence within 2 working days of receipt and the complaint will be acknowledged, in writing, within 5 working days. An appropriate member of staff will be appointed to investigate the matter ensuring the process is unbiased and fair.

ACT aim to deal with all formal complaints normally within 10 working days of receipt of the written complaint.

In investigating the complaint the 'Investigating Officer' may consider documents and meet with individuals at his or her discretion.

The complaint will be investigated and contact will be made with all relevant parties to gather information and supporting evidence.

Within 10 working days the complainant will receive written notification of the outcome of the complaint or details of any ongoing investigations necessary. (Please note informal complaints are aimed to be resolved within 2 working days depending on the nature and severity of the complaint).

If it is not possible for the complaint investigation to be completed to timescale (i.e. within 10 working days for formal complaints), a formal, written communication will be sent to the complainant to explain the reason(s) for this, and with revised timescales. In all cases that extend beyond 10 working days, the complainant will receive written notification of the outcome within 8 weeks. This outcome will be the final decision unless the complainant chooses to appeal.

Appeals

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the decision at Stage 2 they have the right to appeal. An appeal may be made if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome or any action taken relating to their complaint, or should the complainant feel that they have not been treated fairly.

The appeal must be received within 10 working days of receiving the written response to the formal complaint and the appeal must outline the reason/s for the request. The Head of Continuous Improvement and Delivery Director will consider the request for an appeal and acknowledge the request for appeal within 5 working days. The complainant will receive formal notification in writing within 10 working days of receiving the appeal of the decision.

The Head of Continuous Improvement and Delivery Director will designate an impartial representative to carry an investigation of the process previously followed in investigating the complaint. All complaint documentation will be reviewed and in order to reach a decision a Review Panel maybe held to which complainants will be invited to establish and gather further information.

If the process previously followed in investigating the complaint is found to be thorough and to have considered all material evidence, then the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation will not be changed.

In the case of a Review Panel, complainants are permitted to bring one other person with (such as friend, parent, and relative). If complainants wish to bring another person to the Review Panel, they should inform Head of Continuous Improvement at least 3 working days in advance of the Panel Meeting.

The Review Panel Meeting will consist of the Head of Continuous Improvement or designated representative, an independent member of the ACT Senior Management Team and the Delivery Director. In considering the composition of the Review Panel, regard will be given to considerations of ensuring an impartial and independent approach

The Head of Continuous Improvement and/or Delivery Director may in her/his discretion meet with other individuals as part of her/his consideration of your appeal if s/he deems this appropriate. This may include individuals named in the complaint or request for an appeal and other personnel involved in your complaint. The Head of Continuous Improvement and Delivery Director may in her/his sole discretion invite other individuals to attend the Review Meeting, as s/he considers appropriate. ACT will notify complainants of any such individuals at least two days in advance of the review meeting.

The results of the Appeal process will be forwarded as a written report, and ACT will write to complainants with a summary of the outcome of the Appeal process and any actions that are to be taken by ACT. In drawing up a response ACT will be mindful of acting consistently with confidentiality and Data Protection legislation.

Act will aim to ensure complainants receive the written response in 10 working days after the review was completed. If in the case of any delays to this, complainants will receive further progress and a likely timescale for a response to be received.

Monitoring and Review

All complaints will be monitored by the quality team and senior management where appropriate.

ACT will keep records of all related and relevant conversations and discussions for the purpose of future reference and review by the full governing body. Outcomes of complaints will be held centrally and will be reviewed on at least a quarterly basis by the Quality team.

Annex 2 – Process for complaints relating to members of ACT staff

