

# Complaints Policy

## Introduction

Anglia Professional Training is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow APT's formal complaints procedure. For APT to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within six months of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than six months it will not be investigated.

The prime aim of APT's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by APT.

## Aims and objectives of the policy

This complaints policy aims to:

- Encourage the resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- Ensure that concerns are dealt with quickly, fully and fairly and within clearly defined time limits;
- Provide effective responses and appropriate redress;
- Maintain good working relationships between all people involved with APT.

## Who is allowed to complain?

This policy may be used by anyone who has a concern, grievance or complaint about any aspect of APT's services. In the main this will mean the learners or employers of APT's learners, but may include other members of the local community.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

## The Policy has four main stages.

In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member.

- Stage 2 – Formal complaint is heard by the designated lead staff member.
- Stage 3 – Complaint is heard by Director of Business
- Stage 4 – Complaint is heard by board

### **Stage 1 – Raising a concern**

Concerns can be raised with APT at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. APT requests that the complainant make their first contact to any of the teaching or administration staff. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to or call APT within 10 working days and state what you would like APT to do. APT will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

### **Stage 2 – Complaint heard by the Designated Lead Staff Member**

Formal complaints shall be put in writing and addressed to the Director of Business. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. Your complaint will be given to a designated lead staff member who will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action APT has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 working days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call APT within 10 working days of getting our response. You will need to tell APT why you are still not satisfied and what you would like APT to do.

### **Stage 3 – Complaint Heard by Director of Business**

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, the Director of Business will arrange for a further investigation. Following the investigation, the Director of Business will normally give a written response within 10 working days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you will need to let APT know within 10 working days of getting the response.

### **Stage 4 – Complaint heard by the Board**

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the board giving details of the complaint. The board will convene a complaints panel. The hearing will normally take place within 10 working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 4 investigation.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between APT and the complainant. All parties will be

notified of the Panel's decision in writing within three working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further.

### **The appeal hearing is the last stage of the complaints process.**

It is stressed that the majority of complaints are resolved on an informal basis (stage 1).

Issues related to child protection, criminal investigations and employee grievances will be handled separately from this policy.

### **Monitoring complaints**

At all formal stages of the complaints procedure, the following information will be recorded:

- The name of the complainant;
- The date and time at which complaint was made;
- The details of the complaint;
- The desired outcome of the complainant;
- How the complaint is investigated (including written records of interviews held);
- Results and conclusions of investigations;
- Any action taken;
- The complainant's response (satisfaction or further pursuit of complaint).

### **Upholding or not upholding complaints**

At each stage of the complaints procedure, the conclusion will be either:

- 1 That the complaint is upheld (in part or in full) and, where appropriate, some form of action is taken. Or
- 2 That the complaint is not upheld and reasons for this are clearly given.

In the first instance, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review APT's policies in light of the complaint.

In the second instance, the complainant may either choose to take no further action or to take their complaint to the next relevant stage.

## **Publicity and communication**

This policy will be available on request and may also be included, as appropriate, within the following:

- the information given to new learners and employers when they join APT;
- the information given to current learners at the centre;
- APT's website;

All staff and members are made aware of the complaints procedure and the various stages involved.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is vital. All conversations and correspondence will be treated with discretion. Complainants have the right to know what use will be made of personal information and, accordingly, personal information will only be shared between staff on a 'need to know' basis.

## **Equal access, accompaniment and representation**

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that any individual has the opportunity to raise their concerns or submit a formal complaint. This includes the right to be accompanied or represented by a friend or relative at discussions and hearings and/or to submit formal complaints which have been written by another individual on their behalf.

It is an expectation that equal respect will be granted to each person involved within the process and that differences between people will be respected and understood.

## **Appeals**

If at any stage, as the result of a complaint, a decision or course of action is taken with regards to an individual (apart from the complainant) which they feel is ungrounded, unjustified or incorrect they have the right to appeal.

The appeal should be made in writing within 10 working days to the person stated for the subsequent stage.

This policy has been approved and authorised by:

**Name:** Balwinder Gill

**Position:** Director of Business